

TRANSLATED
BY T. D. KRITON



Ε. ΡΟΙΔΙΣ
ΠΑΡΙΣΣΑ JOANN

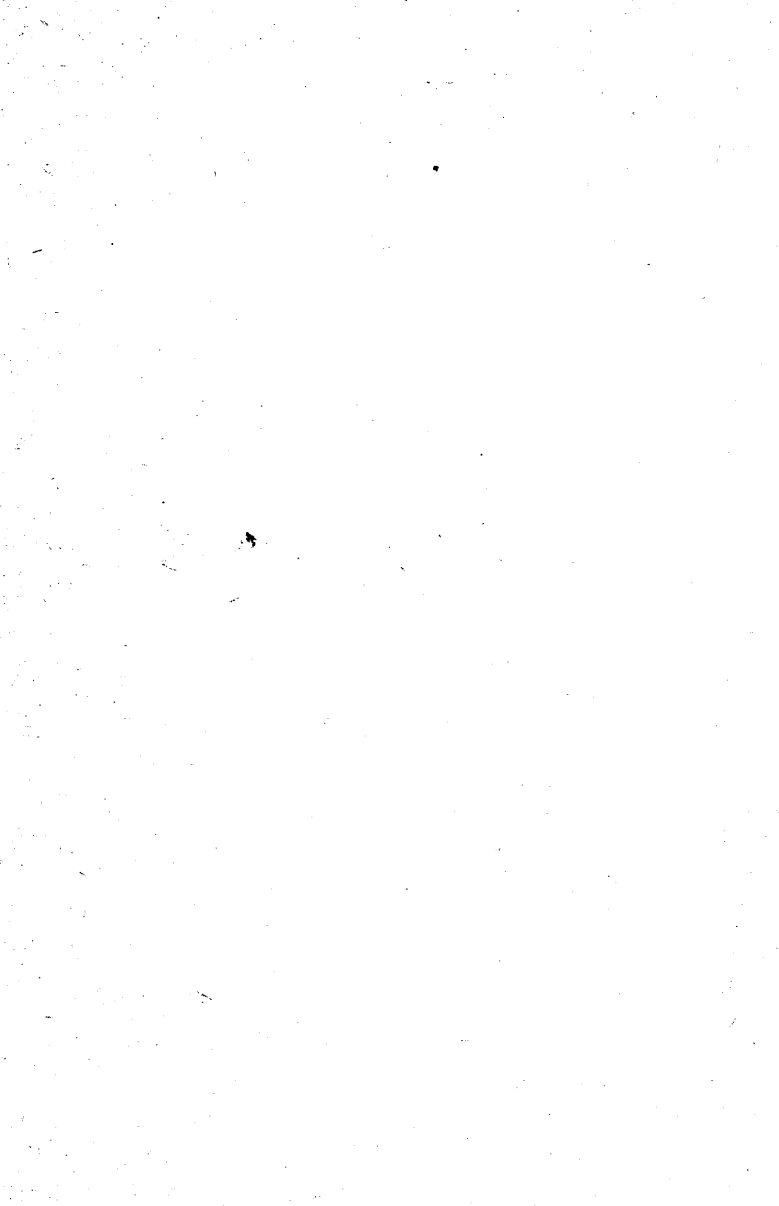
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PAPISSA JOANNA



to H. L. MENCKEN

he Translator, with sincere respect, dedicates this
work,



Rhoides, Emmanouel
E. ROIDIS

PAPISSA JOANNA

**TRANSLATED FROM THE
ORIGINAL GREEK BY**

T. D. KRITON

**GOVOSTIS
ATHENAI**

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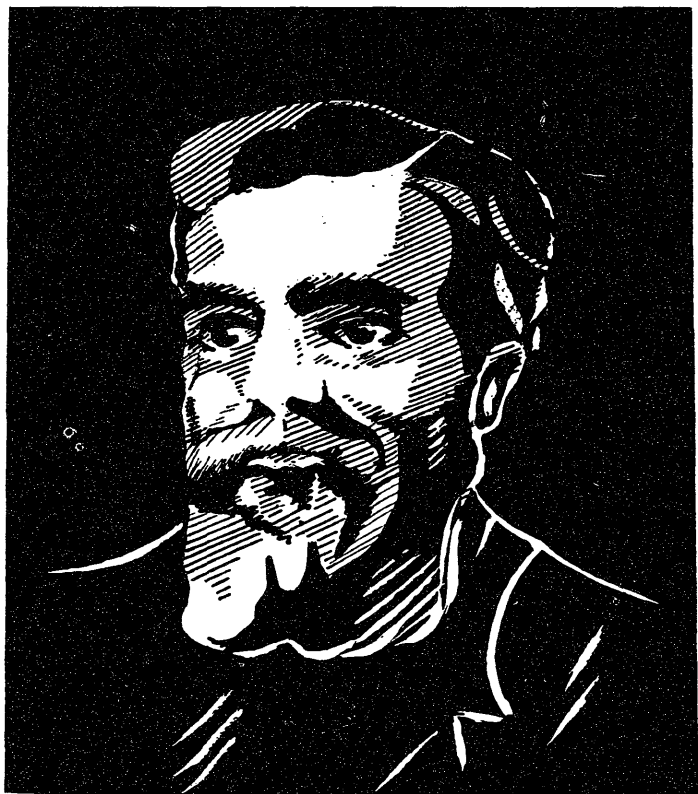
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J. D. Kriton



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EROLD

1835 - 1904

INTRODUCTION

Of the making of books, complains Ecclesiastes, there is no end; and Job in his immortal Lamentations speaks almost opprobriously of those who write them. From which we may be permitted to draw the inference that the auctorial profession is one of the oldest, and was practised in ancient times much more extensively than we might have been prepared to believe but for the testimony of these two impeccable witnesses.

If the advent of another book was in the days of Job and the author of Ecclesiastes such a common occurrence, such a familiar thing as to excite contempt; how much more is it liable to arouse nothing so much as that emotion now, when it is a daily—almost an hourly—happening, and one can no more enter a drug store in quest of a tube of tooth paste, a ham sandwich, or a garden rake than to be accosted by a whole galaxy of authors. And yet the stream of the written word flows undiminished; aye, augmented. Of a surety, faith and hope are not dead—neither of those who write nor those who publish books.

However, Papissa Joanna is *not* «just another book». Far from it. That is not to say that every reader will like it. Some, I daresay, will dislike it utterly—to the point of reviling and roundly denouncing it. Such dislike and denunciation will attest the point of my assertion: it is not a book to which anyone can remain indifferent.

Comparisons, we know, are hardly ever desirable or even valid, unless it be to those who make them. And yet how frequently we are put to employing them—for want of a better method of making—our meaning clear and ourselves quickly and unmistakably understood.

In beginning this brief word of introduction, I had thought to eschew comparisons. In the end, however, I am impelled to draw one or two; as quick, sure way of acquainting the prospective reader, in a sentence or two, with what he may expect to encounter between the covers of *Papissa Joanna*.

The first book which suggests itself in this connexion is *Candide*. I do not mean there is anything approximating exact likeness. All that I want to assert is that whoever has found *Candide* interesting will be pretty sure to have interest also in *Papissa Joanna*.

Another tale of spiritual kinship is that depicting so marvellously the marvellous adventures of *Don Quixote* and *Sancha Panza*. True, the purely comic in this is not duplicated in *Papissa Joanna*, but *Roidis'* sparkling satire suggests *Cervantes* as well as *Voltaire*; just as his broad insinuations, his robust—invective and his droll mockery—all in the service of pinioning accepted dogmas and sanctified conventions—put one readily in mind of the good *Doctor Rabelais*.

I would not have my words misconstrued. I would not push these comparisons one whit farther than to suggest that whoever has liked *Candide*, *Don Quixote*, and the *Tales of Pantagruel*, will also enjoy *Roidis'* masterpiece of the *Greek spirit* *Papissa Joanna*.

San Francisco,
November 10, 1931.

David Warren Ryder.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

«Papissa Joanna» of Kyrios (*) E. Roidis, is a masterpiece of the Greek *spirit*. Its author was a *true* Greek, an Homeric; proving by his life and his works that in spite of the cataclysm, Greece still produces Greeks. One has, I believe, only to read Papissa Joanna to agree with this statement, and to realize that although it is undeniably true that Greece was destroyed by Christianity and Democracy; nevertheless, *true Greeks*-- men of the real Homeric stamp and stature are still to be found everywhere. Even in America, «the land of the free and the home of the brave», I have found more *true* Greeks among the foreigners (i. e. those not racially Greek) than among my blood compatriots.

E. Roidis, the author of Papissa Joanna, was born in 1835, and in the year 1866 finished this masterpiece, which I feel is destined always to remain one of those books that never dies. Anathematized by the Church, his book condemned as sacrilegious to the Faith, Roidis was unruffled and undeterred, and proceeded to write more of this style; holding closely to Byron and Heine as his exemplars and guides. He never married, and one may perhaps be forgiven the speculation that possibly this helped him to be what he was and do what he did. He died in the year 1904.

Neither the anti-Catholic nor the atheist needs to expect what he, in his narrowness, wants from this book; which is above and beyond every kind

of dogmatism ; a book which probably only the superior few, who are themselves beyond such dogmatism, can enjoy. It is for this few that I have delighted to translate it as Roidis wrote it: not adding to or subtracting from it, but striving always to preserve the fine, free spirit of its author ; and to render it into *the English of America*.

As it is gratifying to me, personally, so it will be to many others I am sure, to know by means of this book that after two thousand years, and in spite of the ravages of Christianity and Democracy, Greece again produces the kind of men who *love life* and *Live in Life*.

The translator takes pleasure in recording his sincere gratitude to H.L. Mencken for his ungrudging encouragement ; and to David Warren Ryder for advice and technical assistance which have been of material aid.

While Pappissa Joanna has had previous translations—the latest preceding one in 1900—it is the humble opinion of the undersigned that now, for the first time, has a measurably successful endeavour been made to render the true spirit and style of the author into English.

T. D. KRITON

San Francisco, California, U. S. A.

July 19th, 1931.

(*) It is my innovation to use, for the first time, the word *Kyrios*, meaning exactly *master*, and a master indeed was E. Roidis.

PART ONE

«Il y a bien de la différence
entre rire de la religion,
et rire de ceux qui la
profanent par leurs opinions
extravagantes».

(Pascal, lettre xi)

From the middle always, the epic poets begin. The same order is in use by the novelists, over one tenth of their stories claiming the title of prose poetry. Thus the hero, if he finds time, in the cave or in the palace, on fragrant foliage or on a soft bed, relates the premises to his beloved.

«Because bedded with love is found.»

Such is the common method, a form recommended by the critics. But I, while being friendly to the rule, prefer the form of the cyclic poets and public prosecutors who, in describing the hero or scoundrel, take him from the cradle, and by following chronologically all his steps, lead him to immortality or to the gallows. Therefore I start, to begin; and whoever likes the classical disorder, he can read first the last, then the first pages of the book, thus transforming extempore to an epic novel, my plain and truthful story.

The great Byron had the patience to listen to the

babbling of the old women of Seville, in order to learn whether the mother of his hero Don Juan was saying in Latin, «Our Father which art in Heaven», if she knew Hebrew, and whether or not she wore linen shirt or blue stockings. I also wish to be able to tell the reader, if not all these, at least the name of my heroine's genitor, but in investigating the great tales of the Herodotuses of the Middle Ages, I found him with many and various names, much as Zeus is given many titles by the poets, and the Devil by the Hindus. After spending a few years comparing manuscripts to ascertain whether Joanna's genitor was Villivald or Vallafriid, I have begun to doubt that the public will reward me enough for such labors. So, following the example of today's learned, who are afraid perchance, if losing time to read they might write less and thus deprive their contemporaries and those thereafter, I continue, or rather, I begin my story.

Now the anonymous father of my heroine was an English monk, though from what province he came, I have not been able to determine; as Britain had not as yet been divided into counties for the convenience of the tax collectors. His ancestors were Greek apostles who had been the first to plant the cross in evergreen Ireland, and he was a pupil of John Scotus Erigena, the first to discover a method of manufacturing ancient manuscripts, thus defrauding the learned of the time, like Simonides the Berliners of his time. These facts alone has history saved for us about the father of Joanna. As for her mother, she was called Judith, was a blonde and tended the geese of a Saxon baron. This man, coming down before a feast in order to select the fatter, lusted also for the feeder of the flock, whom he carried from the poultry yard to the bedroom. Burdened with her in

a while, he gave her to his cup bearer, who gave her to the cook, who, in turn, bestowed her upon the pot washer. The last, being a devout one, exchanged the young woman to the monk for the tooth of Gutlhac, the saint who lived and died purely in some ditch of Mercia. Thus Judith fell from the bed of her master to the bosom of the monk ; as to day in England the high hat has fallen from the temple of the diplomat to the skull of the beggar. For in that well governed land, though a good many are dying from hunger, and many must assault modesty for scarcity of a shirt, yet all, senators and grave diggers, earls and beggars, bear the high hat as sumbol of constitutional equality.

The marriage was a happy one. During the day, the monk went from castle to castle selling prayers and chaplets ; in the evening he would return to the cell, his hands wet with the kisses of the faithful, and his sack filled with bread, meats, cakes and nuts. Potatoes were as yet unknown in England, but were later introduced with the constitution for the use of that free people, for when equality was established, the servants ceased to eat good meats from the same tables as their masters.

Judith, when she heard her husband's song from far away in the valley, would set up the table ; that is, she placed on rough boards the platter for them both, the iron fork, the buffalo's horn for a cup, and put dry brush in the fireplace to illuminate their dinner ; napkins, bottles and candles were then known only to bishops. After dinner, the newly-weds spread their sheepskins on a pile of dry leaves, laid themselves upon the sheepskins, and drew over them a thickly fleeced wolf's skin. The more harshly the north wind would blow, the more thickly fell the snow, so much closer hugger together this happy

pair ; thus proving how St. Anthony was fooled when he insisted that cold freezes love, and the Greeks, when they stated that winter was an old woman hater.

Such were the happy days of Joanna's parents

«Warming sweetly in idleness», ()*

when, one morning as the monk shook the sleep from his eyelids, and from his black beard some blonde hairs of his wife, two Anglo-Saxon archers appeared at the entrance to the hut. They stood upon the threshold half-naked and barefooted, carrying long shields, and baskets full of arrows on their shoulders, and called out that the landlord, in the name of Heptarch Ecbert was to follow them and carry with him provision for a long journey. The monk, terrified, suspended his bag over his shoulder took his wife with the right hand, and his cane with the left, while holding fast to the prayer book under his arm, and followed the frowning guides. Three days and three nights they journeyed through bare mountains and valleys of heath, meeting on their way many holy men under the supervision of archers, and on the fourth day they arrived at the small sea shore town of Garrion (**).

Great masses of people were gathered at the pier to which the archers led them. On a grassy throne stood the bishop of Eboracum (***) Volscius blessing the faithful in the bulky Saxon ship that was moving in the harbor, anxious to unfold its fourcornered sail

(*) Theocritus' Idyls, 27, 65, (An. Note).

(**) Ancient name of Yarmouth. (Au. Note).

(***) Now York. (Au. Note).

in the distant breezes of the earth. When the conscripted monks, sixty in number, arrived from all over England, Volscius hugged one after another of them, and gave to each two denars (*).

«Go», he said, «and preach to all nations.»

And from the embraces of the bishop, the missionaries were led to the deck of the hollow ship, and they soon found themselves out upon the turbid waves of the German Sea, without knowing to which shores they were going to seek crowns of martyrdom or the confines of a greasy monastery. While they sail under the protection of the Cross, I wish to pause to inform the reader of what was the matter with the bishop Volscius that he could send to the fickle waves the learned men of the English Church. But for this we must bid adieu to the island of the Britons and depart to the land of the Franks.

The great Charles, after running around Europe reaping laurels and heads with his long sword, after strangling, blinding, or mutilating three quarters of the Saxons, and thus obtaining the submission and respect of the survivors, was taking his rest at the end with his trophies gathered around him, in Aquisgranum, a city famous for holy relics and needles. All went smoothly in the vast empire; the wise Alcuin bathed the filthy subjects of Charles in the sacramental waters of baptism, cutting off their red beards and long nails, and opening to some the treasure of his inexhaustible wisdom, sweetening the lips of others with the honey of the holy word, or feeding them with the roots of grammery, and teaching still another that the same feathers of geese which make the arrow fly fast, are also useful in writing. The happy emperor spent his days with

(*) About four francs. (Au. Note).

nothing to do but count the eggs, play with his daughters and his elephant, gift of Caliph Aroun, and to find guilty murderers or bandits, on whom he imposed a small fine, while he ordered to be swung from trees those of his subjects who ate meat on Fridays or indulged in spitting after communion.

But while pious Charles, who knew his classics, even if he did not know how to write, repeated every day the

haec mihi Deus otia fecit,

the Saxons raised again their daring and uncombed heads, and, plunging their hands not in bulls' blood but that of human victims, they took the oath of Teuton, Erminsul, and Arminius, and declared that either they would shake off the charlish yoke, or blend their blood with the banks of the Albis and Bisurg. He came, he saw, he conquered as usual without striking a blow, this emperor, carrying that same lance, which according to the Evangelists had been used by the Roman soldier who buried it in the Saviour's rib, and was later laid by the Archangel Michael at Charles' bed while he was asleep: in order to reward him for having refrained from roast meats at Lent, and from flesh, by sleeping alone. Afraid that after such a victory he might be compelled by the Saxon savages to suspend his holy business, this holy emperor Charles decided upon the extermination of the defeated, or their baptism by or against their will.

No other missionary succeeded in such short time in christianizing a larger number of unbelievers, for the eloquence of the French conqueror was invincible. «Believe or die», said he to the Saxon prisoner, in whose eyes the executioner's sword glittered as persuasive argument, and the mob jumbled in the font, as do the geese in the ditches after rain. But

inasmuch as it is necessary, however powerful the faith, for the Christian to know what he believes, it was customary in Europe at that time, as it is to day in Tahiti and Malabar, for the newly baptized to learn some kind of catechism. This the corporals of Charles taught the Saxons, by arranging the recruits in lines of ten and striking them mercilessly whenever they stumbled, and found the words, «I believe», difficult to pronounce. Thus Jesus was receiving justice from those idols that brought such suffering to his first followers, when they were burned during the time of Nero, or blinded during the Diocletian period. From this comes the French proverb that, «Vengeance is the pleasure of the gods». (*)

While the war lasted, the soldiers performed the priests' duties, but when things grew quiet again and the theological knowledge of the missionaries was exhausted, everyone, and particularly the Emperor, felt the need of serious catechizers. But among the Franks, the monks were more skillful at making brew than at dogmatism, and they baptized their infants in the name of Patrie, the Daughter's and the Holy Breath's, insisting that the conception of the Virgin was through the ear, while they breakfasted before communion, and forced the deacon to drink the water in which they washed their hands after the mass. In the hands of such instructors, Charles did not dare to trust even these Saxons, for he feared that he might in a very short time, need to make another expedition to them, to overthrow new idols of Bacchos and Morpheus. While hesitating as to what should be done, he took advice from Alcuin, in whose oracles the Franks were then

(*) La vengeance est le plaisir des Dieux. (Au. Note)

seeking refuge, much as the Greeks sought wisdom at Pythia. Alcuin was English, and England at that time had the monopoly of the theologians, as she has of locomotives to day. So a boat was sent there to gather a group of missionaries for the initiation of the Saxons into the mysteries of the faith.

The saving ark of Christianity which took Joanna's father and his wife as passengers, sailed for eight days, and on the ninth passed over the mouth of the Rhine to the harbor of Noviomag, where these seekers of souls landed for the first time on German soil. From there some traveled on asses, some on boats, and others went on foot to the springs of Lippi, arriving at last, weary and hungry, in Pavedorn, where Charles was encamped amidst crosses and shields. The victorious Charles immediately divided Saxonia among the monks, commanding each one to decorate every hut in his province with the Cross. Joanna's father was ordered to go south to Erisburg and to pull down the idol of Irminsul there around which the revolutionaries were gathering, as today they gather at Haftia (*), and to which they were offering human sacrifices and inventing new conspiracies daily. The wretched monk, loading the donkey with his wife and four black saxon breads, started on his new journey dragging the bridle of the animal, and with tears in his eyes, as he recollected the comforts of his native hut,

For eight years, the father of Joanna wandered under the trees of Vistalia, baptizing, preaching, hearing confessions, and burying. He became a greater sufferer than the apostle Paul, for he was beaten many times, ten times was stoned, on five occasions was

(*) HAFTIA: A square of Athens where all gather for amusements. (Tr. Note)

thrown into the Rhine, and twice into the Albis, was burned four times, was hanged thrice, and after all these still lived with the help of Theotokos(*). As for the sceptic who thinks I say impossible things, I refer him to the Synaxaria (**) of that time, so that he may learn how the blonde Panagia (***) supported the feet of the faithful when they were hanged, extinguished the flames with a fan made of angels' feathers whenever they were put on the pyre, and untied her blue bell and held it out to the drowning, as Ino offered Odysseus her veil.

All these sufferings did not prevail to cool the zeal, or to change the mind of the untiring missionary; but his body gradually became unrecognizable, since the Frisians took out his right eye, and the Doggobards cut off his ears, the Thuringians his nose, and the untamed residents of the Eurlking woodland, wishing to exterminate the future generation of the missionaries, sacrificed his two children at the altar of Teuton, and afterwards, with the same inhuman knife, amputated his...every hope for paternity.

Judith, who was still faithful even after his last mutilation, tried in every way to relieve his sorrows. Often awakening at night with desire, he vainly gazed at her with his one eye, and mourned his children and lost pleasures; but she would kiss him, saying: «Day by day I light a candle before the icon of St. Paternu. Perhaps this patron of the blessing of having many offspring will invent some miracle, and we may enjoy children again.» Alas, this wish of the good Judith was fulfilled quite soon, not by a miracle

(*) THEOTOKOS : Meaning, Mother of God. (Tr. Note)

(**)SYNAXARIA: Legend books, saints' history.(Tr.Note)

(***) PANAGIA : All Holy Saintess. (Tr. Note)

of St. Paternu, but by two archers of the earl of Erfurt. These mischievous ones met her by the bank of the Fulda, as she was spreading in the sun the tunic of her husband, who, having no other to wear was hiding, like Odysseus, under the cover of dry leaves waiting for the wash to dry. The archers spread her too, upon the grass, and forcibly reminded her of woman's true destiny on this earth. When the soldiers left satisfied, the unfortunate monk came out of hiding, donned his still wet tunic, and went away with his unhappy wife, cursing the Saxons who placed a crown on his bald head to wear with the halo of his martyrdom.

Nine months after this, in the year 818, Judith delivered in Ingelheim, or according to others, in Mogontia, the future grappler of heaven's keys, Joanna. As she was born amidst the hardships of the wandering life, her father, or rather the husband of her mother, baptized her in the cold stream of Meinengen, where the natives plunged their swords so to render them harder.

The biographers of all heroes decorate their cradles, after the ancient custom, with stupendous signs, thus announcing at the begining their future virtues. Thus Hercules choked the dragons in his infancy, and Criezoti the bear, the bees sat upon the mouth of Pindar, at the age of ten years Pascal invented geometry, the hero of Byron when attending mass in the arms of his hurse, turned away his eyes from the wrinkled saints so as to nail them with emotion upon St. Magdalene, and our heroine, whose career was to excel in the ecclesiastical arera, she never did wish to suckle on Wednesday or Friday, and whenever the breast was offered to her during the fast, she turned her eyes away in horror. Holy relics, crosses and rosaries were her first toys. She knew the «Our

Father in Heaven», in English, Greek and Latin before her teeth sprang out, and before she changed them, she was assisting her father in his missionary work by catechizing Saxon girls of the same age. Hardly eight years old when her mother, the good Judith, died, she delivered the funeral oration, climbing up on the shoulders of the grave digger to give it.

While Joanna was growing in beauty and wisdom, her father, racked by pain and despressed by the loss of his mate, felt himself losing strength daily. In vain did he appeal to St. Geno to make steady his shaken legs, in vain, did he light candles to St. Lucia to empower his eye so to read the psalter, and vain was his pleading to St. Fortio to strengthen his voice. His hands were so faltering that, one day, when offering the Corpus of the Saviour to the beautiful Gisla, abbess of the monastery of Bitterfield, he let it fall on her white bosom, which this slave of God always left naked by special permission from Pope Sergius. The scandal was great; the receiver of the communion turned red, the nuns covered their faces with their hands, and the native priests cried, «SACRILEGE!». And «sacrilege», repeated the lonesome virgins, in faithful echo, and like Bacchae they rushed on the wretched old man, tore off his holy ornaments, and threw him out of the monastery.

For fifteen days the unfortunate missionary wandered, with Joanna, amidst the inhospitable woodlands between Frankfort and Mogontia, passing the nights under the foliage of the trees, and dining on acorns with the pigs of Vestulia. But this food, while it makes these comrades of St. Anthony so fat, rendered the monk and his daughter, in very short time, thinner than the seven ears of corn of

which Pharaoh had dreamed. In vain the monk made an attempt to renew the miracle of his compatriot, St. Patrick, who, by praying, transformed the running wild boars of the mountains in Ireland into fat hams, and equally futile was his pleading with the eagles flying over his head to fetch him food as they did for St. Stephen. Joanna, now and then raising her wet eyes to her father, cried, «Peno»(*). At first, the affectionate father would lift his very thin arms to heaven and reply like Medea; «I shall open my veins, to gratify you with my blood». But hunger gradually dried his throat and his heart, and to the wailings of his daughter he replied laconically, «Peda»(**).

The motion of the lamp led Galileo to the construction of the clock, and our hungry monk was led by a white bear to discover a way of living. Seeing one of these hairy daughters of the pole dancing in a festival while her master collected money from the spectators, he decided to make use of the premature wisdom of Joanna, and so profit as the animal trainer did by the dance of the bear, by allowing her efforts to bring him his daily bread and beer. Rightly then did the wise Erasmus insist that every sensible man can learn a lot of useful things from a bear. So the monk began to prepare his daughter for her new profession by stuffing into the head of the ten year old girl, much of the nonsense which the wise men of that time were wont to call Dogmatism, Daimonology, Scholasticism, or however else they phrased it on the membrane from which they had scraped off the homeric verses

(*) PENO : «I am hungry». (Tr. Note)

(**) PEDA : Jump, as the Greeks of today answer for peno. (Tr. Note)

or epigrams of Juvenal. When he thought she was sufficiently prepared on the subject for this good struggle, they started to go the rounds of the castles and monasteries in the thickly wooded Vestulia.

As they entered a castle, the monk would kneel reverently before the master, bless the mistress, extend his hands or his belt to be kissed by the servants, and then, placing Joanna on a table, would begin their performance. «Daughter», he would ask, «what is tongue?» -- «The whip of the air.»-- «What is air?» -- «The element of life.»-- «What is life?»-- «Pleasure for the happy, torture for the poor, expectation of death».--«What is death?» -- «Absence to unknown banks».-- «What is bank?»-- «The boundary of the sea» - «What is sea?»-- «The home of the fish.» -- «What is fish?»-- «Condiment of the table» -- «What is condiment? «Achievement of the cook».

After a sufficient time of questions and answers, that displayed knowledge of every sort from theology to cooking, the monk would invite the father confessor of the castle to ask the young girl difficult questions in any branch of human knowledge, and Joanna, casting the angle into the ocean of her memory, always drew up the proper answer, supporting it by verse from the Scriptures or St. Boniface. At the end of the examination, she would jump quietly from the table and, taking the corners of her apron between her fingers so to make it appear as a tray, she would pass before each one present and ask with sweet smile for their generosity. Some threw copper coins, others silver, some gave eggs or apples, while those who had nothing to give bestowed a kiss on the brow of the blond preacher.

Thus these two lived for five years and more, eating every day, and often twice a day, and passing

the nights sometimes under the oaken wainscot of a noble's castle, and again under the straw roof of a forester or hunter. The years and remembrances of his misfortunes had reduced in some way or other, the zeal of the missionary, so that he never made any attempt to catechize the unwilling, or to baptize without consent any but the dead, finding many of the latter the day after the battle along the banks of the Albis and the Rhine. He stopped to baptize these, because according to the opinion of the time, baptism, when conferred upon the dead, will open to them the gates of heaven.

After years of such wanderings, the old man traveled at last to those unknown banks from which there is no return. Death took him in the cell of the good hermit Arculfo, who lived by the bank of the Mein, eulogizing the saints, and weaving baskets for the fishermen. Joanna, after she shut the eye of her father, buried him, with the help of the hermit, under the willow tree by the mouth of the river, and engraved upon its trunk an epigraph, recounting the virtues of the departed one. This finished, the unfortunate girl fell down upon the soil that hid the only protector she had on this earth, and mixed her salted tears, as did the wife of Othello, in the waves which wetted her feet. After offering this pious libation on the paternal sepulchre, she wiped away her sterile tears. The grief which we feel for the loss of the dearest one, resembles the extraction of a tooth-- vehement the pain, but instantaneous. Only the living can cause us a permanent grief. Who ever has poured on the grave of his beloved a half, a hundredth, a thousandth time the tears he shed daily for her wickedness in life?

When Joanna stopped her tears, she bowed down to the water that she might cool her burning eyes. -

For the first time, she gazed with attention at her reflection as it was mirrored in the water, and appraised the one creature left in the world for her to love. Let us lean over her shoulder, and look upon the reflection in the running mirror. Face of sixteen, rounder than an apple, hair blonde like Magdalene and uncombed like Medea, lips red as a cardinal's hat, promising inexhaustible pleasures, and bosoms corpulent like the partridge's, still struggling with emotion. Such was Joanna, as she gazed at herself in the water, and thus it was that I saw her pictured in the manuscript at Cologne. In some way that vision appeased the pain of my heroine, who stretched herself out upon the grass, and supporting her head upon her hand, she began thinking of how she would make use of her beauty and wisdom; whether she would wear the cassock, or seek another protector to replace her father. After some time of vague reverie, defeated by the burning heat, and yielding to the lullaby of the cicada, she fell asleep under the shadow of the trees, which protected her from the rays of the sun, and from the looks of the curious.

I do not know whether Joanna had ever read Lucian, but when she closed her eyes, she saw a dream such as that of the Samosatzenian. Two women appeared to her, coming from the water. One of them had her bosoms naked, and wore flowers in her hair, and a smile upon her lips. The other, in black cassock with a cross on her breast, wore a look of devotion. Both were beautiful, the one's beauty memorizing merry festivals, the clinking together of glasses, and the beating of dancers' feet; the wetted look of the other spoke of the mysterious enjoyments of the abbeys, noiseless feasts, and quiet kisses. One would wish to embrace the

waist of the first in a noisy dancing hall under the eyes of many spectators and the light of a thousand candles ; as for the other, one would kneel before her in silent cell with dubious light of the lamp that hung before the image of a saint.

As the women approached Joanna, the first one, running in advance, addressed Joanna as she carressingly interlaced her fingers in the blond locks of our heroine. «I saw you hesitating between the wish for the world's enjoyments, and the silence of the monastery, and I ran at once to guide your inexperienced steps in the true way of happiness. I am St. Ida; there is not one good thing in this world that I have not tested. I have had the enjoyment of two husbands, three lovers, and seven children. I have emptied many bottles of good frenzied wine, and passed many cheerful sleepless nights. I have shown my shoulders to all, my hand was offered to all lips, my waist was compressed by all who knew how to dance, and still I am worshiped and adored with the saints. I had all this enjoyment while eating fish in lent, throwing the crumbs of my table at the gluttonous mouths of the priests, and giving my old dresses for the statues of Panagia. The same future I promise to you, if you listen to my advices. You are poor, homeless, and ragged ; but I too, before becoming the wife of the earl of Ecbert, had frozen fingers in winter; I, too, had as my only property my red lips, but these brought me wealth, honors, and holiness. So have courage, my blond Joanna. You are beauliful like the flowers of the meadow, wise as the book of Inamar, cunning like the fox ol the Black woodland. With these you can aquire anything delightful in life. So go the much treaded road, and allow the stupid to take to the

cape. Find a husband to give you his name and spanish sandals, have lovers who will kiss these sandals, have children that they may console your old age, have, if you wish, the cross, so to take refuge whenever you get tired of the living or they grow tired of you. This road alone leads to happiness; this one I have followed for thirty years, among flowers, banquets, horses, and songs, surrounded by; my husband, who loved me, by lovers who praised my beauty, and by subjects who blessed my name. And when the fatal end came, I expired on the purple bed, having taken the communion from the hand of the archbishop, and supported by my children. And now I am waiting fearlessly for the last Judgment, under the beautiful marblestone on which my virtues are engraved in gold».

Thus spoke St. Ida; and the same advice, very experienced mothers are whispering in the ears of their daughters today, promising salvation and urging them to detest the insipid novelists. And when she unfolded the flashing rosary of the pleasures of the world before the eyes of Joanna, her companion, the cassock wearer, entered, and with quiest flowing voice, like the spring of Siloam, she began: «And I, Joanna, am St. Lioba, child, like you, of Britain, cousin of the patron of that land, St. Boniface, and I was a friend of your father who is buried under this soil.

«You have heard of the world's pleasures from her. Mingling marriages, motherhood, loves and horses, she manufactured from them a gold-filled pill, which she threw at you as the fishermen throw their bait to the fishes. But neither of the price nor the defects of the merchandise did the mediatrix speak. Ask her how many times she shed tears because of the insults of her husband, how many for

the infidelity of the lover, how many over the cradle of the sick child, how many before the mirror, when instead of lilies and roses, paleness and wrinkles were reflected. They were neither fanatics nor fools, those first virgins, when they rejected the world and sought quietness in the shelter of a monastery. For they knew marriages were full of annoyances when they heard the cries of the women when giving birth or beaten by the husband, when they saw their bellies swelling and their breasts extracting milk, and they noted their wrinkles engraved on their brows from sleepless nights and pains. The disgusting look of the urgirted pregnant or suckling woman, drove us into the monasteries, and not visions of angels or the threat of dry bread, as related by those dotards who wrote of the saints. We found independence and rest in the shady cells, where neither children's cries, nor the master's claims, or any kind of care, interrupts our rest. But in order to keep the world from being deserted, and the women from rushing in and crowding the monasteries, we disseminated queer rumors about our life, such as the one that we pass the night kneeling on cold marble, watering sticks until they bring flowers, sleeping on ashes, or flogging our bodies cruelly. Thus the counterfeiters, to keep off the curious, also disseminated the story that frightful ghosts and mischievous vampires often inhabit the caves where the false gold is made. Do not be afraid of either that nickname of St. Pachomius, paximadi, (*) a bread which only the fools do eat, nor of the misery of our garment for look at what is hidden under this rough cloth».

(*) PAXIMADI: Hard, dry, black bread; originally from barley. (Tr. Note)

As she said this, St. Lioba removed the cassock from her shoulders, and emerged wearing a dress as fine as a cobweb from Ceo, contrived air as the poets called it then, and under it her body shone like strong wine wrthin a crystal of Bohemia. And stooping to the ear of the sleeping Joanna, she continued in an undertone : «She promised you pleasures too, that rival; but ask her if she ever had pure sensational voluptuousness, when surrounded by malicious eyes as she surrendered to her lover, tending not her ear to his sweet words but to every noise around her, and turning pale and pushing him away because the door creaked, or the leaves moved. Have you ever seen a cat climbing the table to drink its master's mllk? Slant are her looks, restless her ears, straight up her hair from fear, and ready her feet for escape. So it is when these secular mistresses taste the forbidden fruit.

«But we are not surrounded either by cares or by spies, but by high walls, and woodlands planted with many trees. We pass the day conversing about pleasure, as did the ancient philosophers. And when the hour rings, we retreat to our quiet cells, where in silence and emotion we prepare for the enjoyment as kninghts do for a duel. Dipping this rough haircloth in tepid aromatics, we rub the body with it until it is rendered reddish like the rose, sensitive to every touch like the horse from the spur, and after loosing the hair, we cover the holy icons and lay down, in the winter near the gleam of a cheerful fire, and in the summer near the open window, listening to the song of the nightingale or to the whispering of the leaves. As in the song of songs, we surrender to pleasant dreams, until the sandals of the coming one are heard in the corridor, coming to incarnate those dreams. The easterners invented the twin monasteries,

where the servants of the Most High, and the brides of Christ live under the same roof, divided only by one wall. But we made this invention of the Greeks perfect by opening holes in these walls, from whence, noiselessly and without danger, we receive our brothers of St. Benedict. We were the first ones to cultivate the sweetly breathing rue, which rid us of the trouble of maternity, the strong scented heath that insatiates the lips, and the acute nettle, from which our lovers draw ever new forces, as Antaeos did from the earth.

«But do not think, Joanna, that our life is always confined within four walls and to such enjoyments for our happiness. Sometimes tedium comes to luxury; the sun's way looks too slow for us from the lattice of our cells, and the ironclad knights seem preferable to the monks. So pretending then a pious pilgrimage to some saint's grave, we go around among the people enter their palaces and huts, their shows and bathhouses, and everywhere we find courteous hospitality, open arms, and bowing foreheads. When I went to the court of the emperor Charles, they were celebrating his wedding that night with Hildegarde. Earls, mistresses, knights and prelates, were crowded in the hall of the Aquisgranum palace.

The rhapsodists were singing the exploits of the triumphant bridegroom, the mimics and the dancers were making them laugh with queer grimaces, the dices were rolling, and wine was being passed in silver edged cups. But when my black cassock appeared at the door, when my name, «Lioba, the abbess, Lioba, the saintess!» sounded in the hall, all left their dices, cups and women, to stare at me. Some kissed the ends of my belt, some my footprints, the emperor alone kissed my hands. My hairy gown shaded the splendor of the silk, the diamond, the

painted face and naked shoulders; while among the kneeling crowd I noted the eighteen year old Robert, who raised wetted glances, and joined hands, searching for my face under the veil. When the festival ended, I was guided by the emperor himself to the most magnificent bedroom of the palace, adjoining the garden through a glass hedged door. Awakening in the middle of the night, I opened this door to mitigate the odor of aloes and myrrh, with which the sisters of Charles had aromatized the bedroom in my honor, and right opposite me I saw Robert, sitting under the apple tree, and supporting his arms on his knees, and on them his adolescent head, his eyes avidiously looking at my window. When he saw me, he rose terrified and ready to flee, but with a slight nod, I invited him to enter. Leaping up with one jump, he was before me kneeling, but neither touched me nor said a word, nor did this poor young man dare to raise his eyes. When I put aside his long hair, and searched with my lips for his forehead, lest he be afraid that he might be mistaken by a nocturnal ghost, he felt my dress, my hands, and my untied hair, to be sure it was I, St. Lioba, whom he had half naked and smiling before him. Who of the world's mistresses was ever worthy of such worship, and whose lips in such grateful stupor immersed the lover?

«Two full months I stayed in the palace of Charles; and when I was satiated of banquets and hand-kissings and noise, I bid farewell to the hospitable palace. The emperor himself held the ass' bridle, the empress and princesses were tearfully pleading me to remain, and Robert was tearing his hair in desperation. Such life I promise to you also, Joanna; pure pleasures, instead of the dubious pleasures of the people, independence instead of

slavery, stick of the abbess, instead of the distaff, and Jesus instead of a mortal husband. You have heard Ida advocating for marriage, and you have heard me for monasteries ; choose now, between us, Joanna».

The choice was not hard ; it could be done with the eyes shut. Therefore with no hesitation the sleeping heroine extended her hands to tho eloquent cassock wearer, while her companion, disgraced and with nothing to say for the discrepancy, dissolved in smoke, as did those demons in woman's form who interrupted the pious studies of St. Pachomius, placing their white bosoms or their red lips between his eyes and the breviary. And St. Lioba kissed the new convert on the cheek, and added, overjoyed ; «In order to be assured that your intention for the monastic life was sincere, I did not tell you what a thrice glorious future is in store for you, what priceless recompense. Semiramis became queen of the Assyrians, Morgana of the Britons, and Bathilde, of the French. But you see what you wish to be, Joanna !»

Then a strange vision, dream within a dream. dazzled our heroine. She saw herself seated on such a high throne that her head, adorned with a triple crown, almost touched the clouds, and a white dove hovering near her, refreshed her by fanning its wings. Many people knelt at the foot of her throne ; some of these were swinging silver censers, the vapors rising and condensing about her in sweet smelling clouds, while others climbed high ladders in order to reach and kiss her feet devoutly.

Did it ever happen to you, my good reader, to dream that they were hanging you from a high place, or that you were falling into an immense abyss ? At the instant that the rope tightens around

your neck, or just when your body is about to be crushed, you waken and find yourself in a warm bed, your night cap on your head, and your dog by your feet. Nothing is sweeter than that awakening. You feel your parts and exult to find them safe. You open your eyes, and then the window, so that the bad dream cannot visit you again. But if it ever did happen that you had a good dream in which you discovered the philosopher's stone, or a prudent wife, and you awakened at the instant that your hand reached out to grasp those chimerical treasures, then all must have seemed displeasing and insipid to you. Repelling the disagreeable reality, you withdrew your head back under the coverlet and sought in every way to conceive again those fleeing ghosts. Just such a feeling Joanna had, when she awoke after that enchanting vision and found herself destitute, unprotected, and alone near the newly excavated grave of her father. The hospitable Arculfo came in a little while to offer consolation and food to the orphan, but she, rejecting the good hermit's condolences and his saltless vegetables, asked him instead to direct her to the nearest monastery.

«There is that of St. Blittrude, in Moshava», the old man answered her in astonishment and pointed with his trembling finger to the East.

Joanna thanked him, and tightening the belt of her dress, she followed along the path directed, hasting for the conquest of the goods which St. Lioba had promised to her. And the pious hermit, watching her depart with such quick steps, recorded in his diary that through his prayers the overshadowing trees of his hermitage had acquired the peculiarity of inspiring an unrestrainable impulse for

the monastic life in all those who took rest under the trees' shadow.

Joanna, who in her anxiety had not asked about the exact way, while the road was open to her ran like a pursued deer, but after a while, becoming lost in the maze of narrow tracks and pathways, she began to feel as Demeter did at the brink of the well, feeling she must stop to drink and think of what was to be done. Meanwhile night stretched moonless and gloomy over the woodland, and in that darkness the sinister eyes of the owls and wolves sparkled amidst the leaves and shrubs. The unfortunate maiden, alone in that dreadful wilderness, sometimes remained immovable and silent by the trunk of an old oak tree, then, drawing new strength from the awesome silence, ran like a nocturnal ghost among the trees. Thus she strayed, until she discerned in the more dense part of the woodland, a dim light toward which she directed her steps, hoping to find there some hospitable hermitage. But instead she found only a wooden statue of Theotokos stored in the hollow of a tree, under which burned one of those miraculous lamps in which the oil was never exhausted-- according to the report of some hagiographers of that time, while others said it was renewed every day by the angels. Joanna fell before the statue and prayed to the Virgin, asking protection and guidance that she might come out from that woody labyrinth. Her prayers were heard; threefold asses brayings responded to the maiden's pleas and in a short time the animals appeared, bending under the weight of three corpulent monks, and a fourth ass followed, pulling a one wheel cart on which were two oblong boxes, piously covered with embroidered silver cloth. The three riders, reverends Raleigh, Leguin, and Regibald, had been friends of Joanna's

father, and they were journeying to remove to Mulinheim, the bodies of the martyred saints, Peter and Marcellinus.

Our heroine was permitted to sit on the cart which carried the saints' remains, and the good fathers, after hearing Joanna, began to relate to her their journey to Rome, where they had gone by order of their abbot, Eginhard, to buy holy relics. As they were unable to bargain for the price, they had gone at night, guided by an angel, and holding a lamp to light their labors in the underground church of St. Tiburtius, they opened the graves of the saints Peter and Marcellinus and stole their bones, which, after many dangers, they succeeded in conveying to Germany. These exhumed saints were indignant in the beginning at having their rest disturbed, and many moans and groans proceeded from the coffins, and spirited blood dropped from them every day ; but gradually they submitted to their new destiny, and resuming their former habits, they began to work miracles, curing the lame, the blind, and the paralytics, banishing evil spirits, and changing beer to wine, ravens to doves, and pagans to Christians. These and many other things the reverends narrated to Joanna, praising the good works of their saints, as the male prostitutes praised their Syrian goddess. But the golden promises of St. Lioba were still singing in the ears of Joanna, and she paid little heed to her fellow travelers and their saintly legends, twice and thrice yawning in the midst of their narrations, until at last she fell asleep between St. Peter and Marcellinus. Fearing lest the same thing happen to you, my female reader, we refer you to the next chapter for continuation of our truthful story.

PART TWO

«Regrettez vous le temps où nos vieilles romances ouvraient leurs ailes d'or vers un monde enchanté. Ou lorsque nos monuments et toutes nos croyances étaient le manteau blanc de leur virginité?»

(Musset, Rolla)

Has it ever happened to you my reader, that when you had passed the day reading a novel of the middle ages, such as the exploits of King Arthur, or the Loves of Launcelot and Guinevere, you let the book fall as you began to compare that past epoch with the present, and wished those golden years of reverence, patriotism, and pure love could still dominate the world? Those days when faithful hearts throbbed under iron breast plates, and pious lips kissed the feet of the Crucified; when queens wove the tunics of their husbands, and virgins lived full years in the quiet rooms of their castles, awaiting the return of their lovers; when the illustrious Roland withdrew in a cave opposite the monastery where his beloved was shut in, and spent thirty years looking at the light of her window! Frequently amidst such reveries my blood would course more fervently and my eyes grew moist. But when I left the rhapsodists, I sought the truth hidden beneath the dust of the centuries, in the chronicles of other

contemporary writers, in the laws of the kings, the minutes of the synods, and the decrees of the Popes. When, instead of Arighetti, I unrolled Baronius and Muratori and saw the Middle Ages stripped before me, then I bemoaned, not that they had passed, but that the storied golden days had never appeared in that world of blind faith and heroism.

We left Joanna traveling with two saints, three monks, and four asses. The way they followed was dark and irregular, as involved as the style of the New School, so that both the humans and animals grew tired after trudging along for two hours on the rough paths before discerned from afar, in the summit of a hill, the red lantern of an inn. They turned eagerly to that light of salvation, as did the magi toward the star which pointed the way to the Saviour's manger.

From the times of Tacitus until now, voraciousness and hard drinking have been the deadly sins of the Germans; but the hospitable inhabitants of that ancient Germany became inebriated in their cottages, where they were ready to offer supper and shelter to the weary traveler. But the monks of the Middle Ages, after St. Benedict had substituted wine for beer on the tables of the cenobiums, were compelled to go to the taverns, much as the ancient Greeks went to the agora. In vain did the Synods and Pope Leo anathematize the sellers and drinkers of wine, and vainly did the hospitable hermits found hermitages in the highways and woodlands, offering the wayfarer free hospitality, green vegetables for his table fare, and dry hay on which to sleep. When the weather was bad, the traveling priests would sometimes enter these cells of the hermits, but when the rain stopped, they ran at once to the nearest tavern. Today the inns are established for the sake

of the travelers, but during the Middle Ages many monks turned travelers for the attractions of the inns.

The three reverends, after placing the asses in the stable, the relics of the saints on the innkeeper's bed, and themselves before the fireplace - (summer nights do not exist in that land), they opened their nostrils to smell the aromas that wafted in from the kitchen. A fat goose was being turned above a sparkling heap of coals, and another was boiling in the good wine of Ingelheim. The sight of the ramrod, and the song of the kettle, delighted the hearts of the good fathers, who seated themselves in short order around the marbled table, and were beginning to sharpen their knives and their teeth, in order to be prepared for the prey, when suddenly an importunate memory spread like a black cloud over the cheerful appearance of the guests. «Friday»! said Raleigh thrusting back the plate; «Friday»! replied Leguin putting down his fork; «Friday»! shouted Regibald and shut his wide mouth, and all looked at the geese, as Adam must have gazed at his lost Paradise, and they began to bite their nails in desperation. Men at that time were dissolute, drunkards, impure, and swindlers, but they had not yet become so careless that they would eat meat on the lenten days. The Paradise of that period, like the Olympos of the ancients, was ruled by holy patrons of inebriation, and on earth, the bishops permitted such indulgence, holding it to be according to the example of the Ecclesiastes and of holy Augustine. But whoever did not observe the lents, he was either threatened with divine fire or else was instantly hung in a high tree by the emperor's body guards.

Joanna, knowing from experience what hunger is, was sorry for her hungry comrades. Clever as she was about sophistic reasoning, a science unknown to

the easterners, in which black is proven to be white, the moon square, and vice to be a virtue, she made an attempt to find out in what way they could have supper infallibly. For some time after, she scratched her head, then she counselled ; «Baptize that goose for a fish, and you may eat it without fear. Thus did my good father when captured by the pagans who forced him, with threat of death, to eat a whole lamb on the eve of Pascha (*). Besides, the fishes and the birds were created on the same day, so their flesh is related».

The argument, if not so good, was at least well contrived ; and after all, hunger, which renders tasty the arid bread, seems also to have the peculiarity of reinforcing the most precarious of arguments. It is true that the juries often acquit brigands when they plead that at the time the crime was committed, they had gone hungry for a long time. For the same reason perhaps those guilty of rape ought to be acquitted whenever they can prove that according to Theocritos, *«they had the need of»*.

Father Raleigh, thanking Joanna with a sound kiss on the cheek, took in his hands a cup of water and thrice sprinkled the geese, saying with contrition ; «In nomine Patris, filii et Spiritu Sancti, haec erit hodie nobis psicis». «Amen», responded his comrades, and in a short time only the bones were left of the recently baptized fishes. Having satisfied their hunger, the good fathers thought to quench their thirst as it was the habit at that time for the monks to eat first until satiated, then to ask for salty condiments and wine, to cool and dry the throat, all the while contesting by turns to see who could drink the most. Drunkenness at that time was the cheapest

(*) PASCHA : Easter Sunday. (Tr, Note)

of enjoyments; the price of a gallon of wine was about seven denaries, and not alone in the tavern, but also in the churches and the streets, and even in the women's apartments, it flowed freely, not at all held back by the decrees of the Popes and Synods. According to the custom of the time, each of our reverends, before he started drinking, took some angel's name, the one Gabriel, the other Michael, and the third one, Raguel. Then they started emptying the cups made of horns, not to their health, or for the fatherland, nor for absent friends as is the worldly custom, but to Pangia, St. Peter, and all the inhabitants of Paradise. Such was the rule of those godly times, which instituted inebriation as a condition pleasing to God.

Meanwhile, night advanced, the innkeeper went to sleep, the oil of the lamp and the wine of the jug were draining, and the heat of monks alone was advancing, increasing with every cup. Their eyes sparkled like Charon's, and from their lips inarticulate sounds began to issue, some blasphemies and invocations to Parthenos (*), hymns and bacchical songs. Joanna, knowing that wine brought on profligacy and remembering that Solomon wrote against, debauchery in the midst of three hundred wives and seven hundred concubines, retired quietly into the darkest corner of the room. But not even there did she find rest for long, for the good fathers, after they had satiated their hunger and thirst, felt the necessity to satisfy that sixth sense, for which no name is found by the physiologists, though the more modest chroniclers have called it the taste for raw meat. So taking their cassocks between their teeth,

(*) PARTHENOS : Virgin. (Tr. Note)

as is the expression among the monks, they rushed upon our very unhappy heroine.

Do not hasten to blush, my worthy female reader; the steel pen with which I write this true story is English made, and came from the Smith's factory; for this reason being as modest as those blonde English girls, who, in order not to soil their virginal dress, raise it up to their knees, showing the passersby their wide feet in their double soled sandals. No, there is not much danger of hearing much from me.

To a virgin do not say bad things ()*

Joanna, pursued by the three monks, ran about the room leaping over tables and chairs, sometimes slinging a dish, and sometimes a maxim of the Scriptures at them. But her sacred eloquence and the utensils of the table broke in vain upon those drunkards, as waves upon the rocks. When their hands stretched for her, she perceived on the bed the relics of the saints, and she retreated behind them. The reverends withdrew at once, before that sacred bulwark, as the wolves withdraw from the fires with which the shepherds guard their stalls. But soon after, forgetting their respect for the holy relics, they dashed upon the bed, on which the wretched young girl shivered like a lark in the net of a hunter. The collision here was so violent that it caused the bed to fall, and with it the boxes of the saints, whose martyrical bones rolled upon the floor. Joanna, remembering then that Samson had struck down a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass,

(*) Euripides' Orestes, 26. (Au. Note).

prayed to the highest to strengthen her right arm, and taking one of St. Marcellinus' legs, she started to beat her lustful pursuers. But their bones seemed to be harder than those of the saints, and in a short time the weapon broke, and the strength of our heroine being exhausted after much stubborn resistance, she fell at last on the battlefield and submitted to destiny. But there were in heaven at that time, saints and saintesses miraculously working to save the virgin from danger.

At the moment that reverent Raleig, who as the elder enjoyed the preference, bent over Joanna, his stinking and vile breath defiling the pale face of the little girl, suddenly there came a monstrous transformation! A strange miracle made him withdraw with terror. Neither as a tree, like Daphne, was Joanna transformed, nor as a dove like St. Gertrude, nor as a worm-eaten parched body like Bassina when she lay with Don Rupert; but from her virginal skin there sprang out unexpectedly a long beard, thick and aspirated, such as those that overshadowed the faces of the Byzantine icons (*). Thus had Panagia saved the virgins of that time, whenever they were annoyed by the rough monks; as vigilant for their honour, according to St. Hieronymus, as a jealous mother-in-law for the honour of her sons' wives.

Joanna, thanking from her heart the virgin for her saving intervention, arose and flourished her long beard like the head of Medusa at the terror-stricken monks who ran from the room.

Then, going to the stables, she untied one of the asses, and mounting it, she withdrew from that abominable haunt, where she had been in danger of

(*) BYZANTINE ICONS: The author refers to the monstrous art of the icons of the Byzantines. (Tr. Note).

losing the only dowry she had to offer to her heavenly bridegroom. Needless to say, when the danger had passed, her beard also vanished.

The shadows of night lifted in the trees of the forest, and darkness began to disperse to make way for the day. After a short time of wandering, our heroine found herself in the midst of a heather plain, with the pure white sky over her head and a black ass between her legs. Joanna, not knowing the way, had been following wherever the four feet of the beast of burden led her, but she now discovered the current of Mein, and she proceeded to follow the winding of the stream, as Theseus once followed the thread of Ariadne. At last she arrived, at the sun's setting, at the end of her journey.

The monastery of Moshava was built at the foot of an abrupt mountain, placed there by St. Blittrude that the zeal of the nuns might not be cooled by the breath from the north. The evening prayer was ending at that moment, and the monastic virgins were coming out of the church holding hands, and resembling a rosary of black pearls. Seeing Joanna, they encircled her immediately, asking her who she was, where she came from, and what she desired. When they heard that she wished a cassock, sandals and a cell, they conducted her to the abbess, who betrothed our heroine to the Saviour, freeing her from the ten month test in recognition of her deceased father's services to the Church.

St. Blittrude immediately loved the new nun, and because of her learning and intellect, appointed her keeper of the monastery's library, which contained sixty seven volumes, a fabulous wealth in those years. Joanna, alone from morning until evening in her cell, during the first few days fell into that monastic enervation which overtakes the newcomers in

the monasteries, similar to that malaise which affects those who board a boat for the first time. Entering and departing from her cell, cleaning the books, her nails, and hair, counting the berries of the rosary, she censured the sun for marching so slowly to its rest. Her comrades, envying the benignity which Joanna enjoyed from the abbess, and afraid that she might spy upon their words and acts, withdrew from her with distrust. Frequently, at the time of recreation, while the other virgins dissipated in parties in the garden, conversing hilariously, scuffling the old women, narrating the night's dreams, showing their lovers' notes, comparing the length of their feet and the color of their lips or their hair, Joanna stood alone like an obelisk in the centre of the square, measuring the height of the trees, and blaming St. Lioba that instead of pleasures, she found only tedium and boredom in the monastery, much as the adventurers cursed the newspapers whenever, instead of gold, stones and fevers were found in California.

Despair and idleness are, I think, the chief motives for religious devotion. When we have nothing left to do or hope for upon earth, we gaze at the sky, and we kiss the icons, whenever we have nothing else to kiss. However, Joanna, who formerly employed her theological knowledge as simple means for a living, learned the Scriptures and the fathers by heart, just as Madame Ristori memorized the verses of Alfieri, when she found herself within the four walls of a suffocating cell. So, finding the present insipid, she began to think of the future life. But monasteries have, through all the ages, been the realms of peculiar desires. The Egyptian monks watered sticks until they yielded fruit; the saintesses of Hungary did eat lice, and the Hesychasts lived for whole years with a fixed look on their bellies, from

which they expected to see the light of truth proceed. And Joanna, surrendering to metaphysical studies, now spent the day stooping over the writings of St. Augustine, who, as an eye witness, described the enjoyments of the blessed ones, and the flames of Hell. Then, thrusting her fingers in her blonde hair, she would address to herself those questions about our present and future life which all the inhabitants of the valley of the wailing address to themselves with desperation, while the spiritualists and theologians answer them with evasion and commonplaces, much as cabinet ministers dispose of annoying office hunters. Strange dreams began to disturb our heroine's sleep; no longer those of St. Lioba promising inexhaustible pleasures, but of devils brandishing frightful horns, or of angels holding large twoedged swords. At one moment she would hope for the joys of paradise, and at another, she was afraid of the nails of the Devil; for one day she believed the truths of Christianity, from the gospels to the miracles of St. Martin, and for three, she hesitated about everything. Sometimes she would bow her head and await divine condemnation, and on other occasions, she would have thrown stones at the sky, if she had them, so as to break it (*). In a word, she was seized by that monomania which all those who sincerely seek the solution of our mysterious existence, undergo.

What are we, where did we come from, what is our future fate? Such questions in the human encephalon, as plastic as wax in water, she sought to solve. In the meantime the hair of poor Joanna was left

(*) The sky at that time supposed to be crystal. (Au. Note).

uncombed, and her teeth idle; her eyes grew red from sleeplessness, the face pale, and the nails black. According to the illustrious Pascal, such ought to be the physical condition of the true Christian on earth, living continually between the fear of Hell, and the hope of salvation, and with many groans, seeking in the darkness the road to Paradise. But that condition, as aristocratic as it may be, even specialized to the superior minds, I do not wish for you, my good reader. Rather is it preferable to be merry, in the manner of those good Christians who sing hymns to the saints, and eat cuttle fish on Fridays, as they wait, free from care, the pleasures of Paradise. Many, wishing to show superiority of mind, pity those happy mortals, but I envy their calm hearts, and the vividness of their cheeks. If some Turk, or fire worshipper, sought to be Christianized, I would advise him to choose the Catholic Church above all others, for its ceremonies are so magnificent, the liturgy so brief and the fasts so liberal; and its music pleases the hearing, while its icons delight the eyes. As for his spiritual advisor, I would urge him to choose, not a wild one like Bossuet, or Lacordaire who describes so vividly the torturous Hades and its inhabitants, but rather, a mellifluous student of Escobar, in order that he might be led to the blessed mansions on a satin carpet. The Highest, according to the holy Augustine and Lactantius, does not detest the flourishing paths, whenever they lead us to Him, so why should we search for Paradise amidst thorns and thistles and boiled vegetables, listening to nasal songs, and kissing ugly icons? (*)

(*)KISSING THE ICONS: The orthodox kneel or stand, making the sign of the cross, and kiss the icon. (Tr. Note).

But here let us return to our subject, and leave these digressions to the fifty-seven newspapers of Athens, and the four bells of the Russian church, rather than interrupt every moment the context of my story.

The evil diseases, such as plague, smallpox, and those others originated by Eros and his golden-haired mother, have, at least this one advantage: that we are subject to them only once. The metaphysical disease of Joanna was in this category. After three months of scratching her head, as she sought the solution of the indissoluble riddle, she finally closed her books, and opening the window of her cell, she smelled the aromas of spring. April was nearly ended, and nature was everywhere verdant, smiling, and odoriferous, resembling a young woman dressed by a skilled chambermaid. The vapours of the spring intoxicated the young nun, who, after three months of musing in the darkness of her cell and metaphysics, gazed and smelled with increasing cupidity, the herbage of the meadows, and the fragrance of the violets. Between the spring and our hearts when we are twenty, there exists, according to the poets and the doctors, a mysterious and inexplicable relation, such as that of Socrates to Alcibiades. Whenever we see green trees, soft grass or shady caves, we feel instantly the want of a companion in that paradise. And Joanna remembered her dreams and hopes which she possessed on entering the monastery, where she found in their stead, ennui, old books, and disagreeable thoughts. «Lioba, Lioba». when are you going to execute your promises?» she cried at last, as she shook the lattice of her prison in desperation. And, not having in her cell a dog to beat, or Chinese vases to break, she hid her face between her hands and started to weep. Nothing is sweeter than

those tears, when a ready hand is found to wipe them away, or lips that seek to absorb that rain of the heart, as it is called by the Hindus. But when one weeps alone, tears then are true and bitter, like every truth in the world.

In a short time, the noise of footsteps in the corridor detached Joanna from her grievous thoughts, and opening the door, there entered the abbess, holding by the hand a beardless young man wearing the garment of St. Benedict, his eyes fixed with solemnity on his sandals. «Joanna,» said the superior, presenting the young monk to our astonished heroine, «the abbot of Fulda, Saint Rabanus the Black, with the intention of sending preachers to Thuringia, demands from me the epistles of St. Paul written with gold letters on expensive parchment, thus with the brilliancy of gold, hoping to dazzle the eyes of the infidels and inspire in them more respect for the truths of the Gospel. The new Benedictine is Father Frumentius, distinguished like you, for his devoutness and calligraphy. Co-operate with him, until the order of our brother, Rabanus, is accomplished. Take gold ink; you have pens. I shall send you food from my own table. Farewell my children.» Thus having spoken, St. Blittrude departed, closing the door behind her, as do the peasants in Moldavia whenever the overseer visits their cottages. St. Blittrude was among those virtuous women whose minds are incapable of suspecting evil. If she had seen a deacon kissing some virgin of the monastery, she would believe that he did it to confer a blessing. From childhood she had been scarred by small pox, so she knew only innocent kisses, and could not believe there were any other kind in the world. Besides, the followers of St. Benedict, both men and women, lived pel mel in the monasteries. According to some

chroniclers, their relations were innocent and spotless, as those of our saint Amoun, who lived eighteen years with his wife, when she died, still a virgin. But according to Muratori, the intermixture bred both scandals and children, though the latter were usually thrown in the stream of the Fulda, thus saving the honor of the monasteries and feeding the fishes.

The young pair, when left alone, knowing how valuable was the time, lifted up their sleeves and started immediately to work; that is, to the copying of St. Paul's epistles. For fifteen days the young monk came every morning to the cell of Joanna, where he co-worked with her until evening. But that eighteen year old young man, who had read neither the Scriptures, nor St. Augustine's confessions, nor the speech of St. Basil about virginity, nor any other sacred book, was on this account, pure and spotless as the snow upon which St. Francis rolled to appease the temptations of the flesh. So, while the copying of St. Paul's epistles was progressing rapidly, the relations with Joanna remained stagnant.

Whenever the hand of our heroine touched his hand, or their hair interweaved as they bent over the parchment, he felt his heart throbbing like the bell of a fortress in time of danger, but he could not even say whether it throbbed at the right or at the left. Now Joanna had often read Origen, Chrysostom and the canons of the Fasting; she knew everything theoretically; she could even discuss these, using those technical words known only to doctors, hetaerae and theologians. But it was the first time she found herself alone with a man; and her confusion about what should be done increased daily, and she was as puzzled as were those English travelers in

the middle of the Egyptian cemeteries which they had so accurately studied on the map.

The situation of the two youths every day became more tiresome. Neither did Frumentius know what to ask, nor Joanna what first to offer. Meanwhile, the copying neared its end; only the epistles of the Hebrews were left, and then the bitter and inevitable separation would come upon them. Joanna, like another Penelope, often scraped off at night what they had written during the day. Her companion understood the trick, foresaw her intention, and blushed or emitted sighs capable of moving the wings of a windmill, but limited himself to such expressions, and the day passed like the others, full of futile desires and disappointed hopes. But neither you reader, nor I, have so many days to lose. What is more, in writing a true story, I cannot imitate those poets or authors, who heap up palpitations, tears, blushings, and other platonic supplies, yoking two by two their mellifluous verses, as the husbandmen join the oxen to the plough, and smooth off periods rounder than Aphrodite's paps. The great Dante called these artists panders, but neither the name nor the profession pleases me. So leaving these devices to Plato, Ovid, Petrarch, and other sweetish and insipid followers, I shall always describe the truth, naked and uncombed, just as it emerged from the well.

The two lovers had finished the copying of the last epistle, when the sun, which Galileo had not yet condemned to immobility, was going through its daily rotation. It was the hour when the cows returned to the stable, and the Christians kissed the Parthenos with «Ave Maria». The bell had summoned the nuns to the evening prayer, and there was no longer any noise in the corridors of the mo-

nastery. Joanna, sitting near the window, was skimming a volume of Scriptures, and Frumentius stared ecstatically at his companion, about whom the setting sun, passing through the red glass of the cell, cast a radiant circle such as those represented about the heads of the saints by the Russian painters. Our heroine, however, then seventeen, did not resemble those white and angel-faced virgins, whom none dared to touch for fear they would open their wings, nor could she even be compared to a rosebush; but rather to that plant of warm Palestine, which offers on the same branch, not only fragrant flowers, but also appetizing fruit for the hungry traveler. The shadow of the cell and the good table of the monastery, had strengthened the body and softened the skin of good Joanna; her hair, only once cut, waved thicker than before on her round shoulders. All these were truly, in some way uncombed, unattended, and neglected, but according to the poet (*), neither pure gold needs gilding, nor roses additional fragrance, nor the lily a cerise bloom; neither does a seventeen year old girl, I think, have need of perfumes and curls.

Frumentius continued to be silent, and Joanna went on turning the leaves of the Scriptures, sometimes muttering between her teeth, and sometimes reading aloud the verses. But shortly she ceased to skim, and with pleasing voice, like that of a young Hindu charming a poisonous snake, she started to read.

«The Song of Songs», which is Solomon's. «Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth... Your paps are better than wine, and the smell of your myrrha beyond all aromas; evacuated myrrha is your name; for these the young women loved you. Behold in what place my dear brother, and how handsome our

(*) Shakespeare. (Au Note).

bed ; come overshadowing, and lie between my breasts in a fold. Let us go to the field, there meeting you outside to kiss you, there I will give you my breasts. Prop me in myrrha, pile me with apples, as I am mortally wounded from love. Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm. Powerful is love as death ; no water is enough to extinguish it, and no rivers can deluge it».

Frumentius, hearing this, and not knowing that those apples, breasts and kisses were prophetic allegories picturing the future love of the Saviour to the Church, felt like another Job, the flesh and his hair terrified from desire. With every verse of that heavenly incantation, he approached one step nearer the reader, and at the last verse was before her kneeling. Joanna then raised her hand from the book and the eyes of the two lovers met. When one finds oneself at the brink of a precipice, (and such was, I think, the position of our heroine), it is necessary they say, to shut the eyes, otherwise one grows dizzy and falls ; but she did not shut her eyes, and so fell... the book from her hands.

Quel giorno più non vi leggero avanti (*)

The deputy of Prussia, at the peace table after the Crimean war, wanted an eagle's feather with which to sign his name and his titles to the treaty ; but I wish I had one from the wings of Eros for a pen with which to describe the daily happiness of the young couple. Solitude, quietness, abundant food, the breath of spring ; none of these was missing to complete the happiness of the lovers. Joanna,

(*) Dante's Inferno, canto V. (Au. Note)

relieved from the matin for the sake of the copying, as well as from readings, worshippings, and other monastical drudgeries, could stay with her companion from morning until evening. But though it was the middle of June, still did the days seem too short to the insatiable lips of these youths. Often, when seated at the hour of the evening services near the open window, while the bells resounded mournfully, as though lamenting the dying day, these two sighed deeply, and like Joshua, cried, «stand still!» to the sun, but he was proceeding to throw light upon the antipodes, and the lovers would separate, to await the following day.

Ten days more they passed in that narrow cell, writing, conversing, and kissing, and no other fault was found with the weather which was so beautiful, except that it passed too swiftly. But finally came the ill-omened day of separation. The copying of St. Paul had ended long ago, and the abbot sent a mule and a verbal order for Frumentius to return to the fold. The unfortunate young man, cursing his oaths, the elder, and all the saints, went to bid farewell to his friend, holding in his hand the traveling cane; but he could not restrain his tears. Joanna did not cry, as some of her comrades were present, and women, however tender they may be, weep only as often, and where, it is proper. A fine example of this fact is to be found among those easily affected English women who, when they go to hear Ristori, note at the margin of Myrrha and of Medea, where it is proper to shed tears.

But as soon as Joanna was again left alone, she felt that weight on her stomach which overtakes us after we eat too much, or lose our mother, lover, fortune, or something difficult to replace from one day to the next. According to that respected ancient

Plutarch, women do not even know the shadow of true love. But I think it is to them an incidental illness, for only reason can know the monotony and solitude. The women of the world, passing from one man's arms to another's every night, (I mean at the dance), have time neither to sigh groans, nor to love anything else except their fans, resembling that ass who remained fasting in the middle of four heaps of trefoil, as he knew not which one to prefer first. Probably I am deceived, but all the amorous I have know were either shut up little girls, guarded by vigilant parents, like the apples of Hesperides, or mature mistresses numbering more years than admirers.

The sadness of poor Joanna, alone between those four walls, where only yesterday so many amorous oaths and kisses resounded, grew more poignant every day. St. Augustine, whenever dull, rolled in the mud as in a fragrant bath; St. Genevieve shed tears until she was forced to change her blouse; St. Francis hugged snow-covered statues; St. Libania tore her flesh with an iron comb, and St. Luitberga swallowed needles. But our heroine, wisest of all, lay in a corner of her cell, and with a fan of pigeon's feathers (the only kind allowed in the monasteries), attempted to drive away the flies and annoying thoughts. The langorous June heat made her affliction more bitter, and the days seemed as long as those of an aged uncle to his waiting heirs. Sometimes, in the paroxysms of her desperation, in order to send away the troublesome ghosts that surrounded her, she took refuge in the godly recipes of Synaxaria, sometimes whipping herself with the belt, and sometimes saturating her sheets with icy water, or else seeking to drown her grief in wine, at the

counsel of the Ecclesiastes(*). Yet all these wonder working antidotes, and even that agnus castus, the odor of which, according to the hagiographers(**), was sufficient to drive away every temptation, were not strong enough to overcome the bitterness of separation.

Time, they say, heals all wounds; but not, I think, love or hunger. On the contrary, the longer one remains prudent or fasting, the more his relish enlarges, until he is ready to eat his shoes, like Napoleon's soldiers in Russia, or to make love to his she-goats, like the shepherds of the Pyrenees. In just such a condition was our heroine, when, one evening, while sitting despondently by the fish pond dividing her supper among the carps, the gardener of the monastery approached her mysteriously, and turning around with uneasy looks, secretly delivered to her a letter written with purple ink on the thin skin of a still-born lamb. Joanna, unfolding it, found (amidst garlands of flowers, pierced hearts, kissing doves, burning candles and other passionate symbols with which the lovers then decorated their letters) this message, reading:

«Frumentius to his sister Joanna rejoicing in the Highest».

«As the deer longs for the springs of water, thus my soul is thirsty for you, my sister(***). Lamentation overtook me, and water is running from my

(*) Allow drunkenness for griefs and drink wine for tortures. (Au. Note)

(**) HAGIOGRAPHERS: Writers of saints' lives. (Tr. Note)

(***) Psalms, 41, 1. (Au. Note)

eyelids(*). Tears are the food of my days, and the sleep of my nights(**). The hungry dream of bread, and I saw you at sleep, Joanna(***), but awakened and did not find you near me. Ascending then my black ass, I came to your holy tabernacle. By the grave of St. Bona I am waiting. Come, my dove, chosen like the sun(****), come with your rays to overshadow the moon».

Such was the letter of Frumentius. Today, when writing to a woman, we steal from Foscolo and Sand, but the early poets copied the psalms and the prophets, so their letters were burning like the lips of Sonamitis and the sands of the desert.

About five o'clock in the evening, when the bell called the virgins to prayer, Joanna, holding her sandals with her right hand, and with the left her heart to appease its throbbings, descended the stairs of the monastery, slipping away as quietly as a snake in the grass. The moon, that faithful torch of the smugglers and adulteresses, which the poets euphemistically called *chaste* and *shy* as the Erinyes, rose shortly behind the bulwark of the monastery and illuminated the course of the runaway heroine, who hastened to the meeting, cruelly trampling underfoot the celeries and leeks of the monastery's garden. After half an hour of such walking, she arrived at last at the cemetery, which was so densely shadowed by cypresses and blindweeds, that neither a breath of wind, nor the sun's rays could penetrate that refectory of the worms. Frumentius had tied his ass to the branch of a tree which shadowed the grave of

(*) Jeremiah, 9, 18. (Au. Note)

(**) Psalms, 79, 5. (Au. Note)

(***) Isaiah, 29, 8. (Au. Note)

(****) Song of Songs, 1, 5. (Au. Note)

St. Bona upon which he seated himself, raising at the end of his cane, a horn-made lantern, that it might suffice as a guiding light for his dearest. As soon as he saw Joanna advancing with timidity among the graves, he rushed to her, like Capuchin to a ham at the end of Lent. But the place was not suitable for such greetings, so hanging the lantern around the neck of the ass, and mounting with Joanna, on the rear, they hastened to withdraw from those funereal shadows. The wretched animal, bent under the double load, yet encouraged by the prod of four heels, inclined his long ears and started to run, emitting a species of protest with such resounding brayings that, (according to an authentic synaxarist) many of the dead virgins, believing that the trumpets of Judgment had sounded, drew out their bald heads from the graves.

Joanna, having as belt the arms, and as support, the breasts of the good Frumentius, breathed the air of the fields with indescribable joy. The young couple, having passed through the forest, now ran on an open field planted with barley and beans. When the sun rose shortly after, the young monk, to protect his companion from the rays of the summer sun, compelled, with wonder working appeal, a great eagle to spread his wings over her head, following in his flight the stride of the ass. Such miracles did the Christians of that time achieve, when hearts were simple, faith flourishing, and prayers powerful with Panagia. Today the erudites, the incredulous wise men of the century, hold a compass and microscope. instead of the cross and rosary ; they know certainly how many feathers there are in the tail of each bird, and how many seeds each budding flower encloses ; but they can neither tame the eagles with one nod, nor change the thorns into lilies with one

tear. But despite their natural gifts, those wise men are insulted even by the holy Abbot Crelieu, who calls them idolaters, because they continued to maintain in the Christian sky, Hermes and Aphrodite) (*) ; and atheists, because they changed about the names of the plants, bawling like another Jeremiah, «Anathema, Anathema ! and again anathema to progress and science».

After four hours journeying, the runaways stopped to rest near a small lake, by the edge of which there had been raised a colossal statue of Irminsul. This statue was hurled down in one breath by St. Boniface, down to the depths of the lake ; but his early adorers, though they had become Christians, preserved in the deepest recesses of their hearts, some remains of devotion to their drowned patron. And they continued to offer him gifts every year ; throwing cakes, candles, honey combs and cheeses in the water, to the great delight of the fishes, who became as fat as the priests of the Syrian goddess on these offerings. Frumentius, having descended on his mother's side from the heroic combatants of Vitikend, was as superstitious as any true child of Saxony, and Joanna, although a profound theologian, yet, like Socrates, would grant a point to favor the prejudices of contemporaries. Most of the Christians of that time, still hesitating between the Christ and the idols, resembled that devout old woman of Chios who every day lit a candle before the icon of St. George and another before the Devil, saying that it is good for one to have friends everywhere.

So the two lovers, kneeling by the edge of the lake, laid before Irminsul the remains of their breakfast, some hair from their heads and a few drops of

(*) That is the planets. (Au. Note)

their blood, with this mixture binding their inseparable union, as the Duke of Venice made his union with the sea. After the ceremony Frumentius took out of the saddle bag a monk's dress, and entreating his friend to wear it, he assured her that in this way she might be accepted as newly-converted at the monastery of St. Fulda. «Thus», added the blushing young man, «we may live undisturbed in the same cell, eating from the same plate, and dipping the pen in the same inkwell; whereas, if they understand you to be a woman, the superiors will shut you away with the other catechizers in the women's apartments, where they alone are permitted to enter, and I will die at the door-post in desperation».

Joanna, rejecting the disguise as a profane act, argued against her lover's entreaties with a maxim from the Scriptures; «there shall be no man's apparatus on the woman, and no man shall wear woman's clothes». But he insisted, and from the verse of Deuteronomy arrayed against her argument the opinion of Origen, who said that all women would be transformed to men on the day of Judgment. In response, Joanna remarked that Origen was a heretic and, moreover, a eunuch; but Frumentius reminded her of the example of St. Thecla, sister of the apostle Paul, St. Margaret, St. Eugenia, St. Matrona, and the many other saintesses who hid their white bodies like angels' wings under a man's cassock, and acquired sanctity living with the monks. The youth, passion, and beauty of the young catechist were added arguments to make his logic invincible, so that Joanna very shortly trod the commands of Moses under her little feet, and drew the cassock over her feminine dress. She also put on those sandals which in the future the mighty of earth would kiss as they knelt around her throne. The

transformation completed, Frumentius guided her to the edge of the lake, that she might gaze upon her reflection.

Never before did the cord tighten the waist of such a charming monk. Her face shone under the monastic cowl like a pearl within its shell. Her lover knelt before her in ecstasy, and in his boundless admiration, began to praise the beauty of this new brother, whom he called John, with one of those mysticanatomical hymns with which the monks of that time exalted one by one the members of Panagia; praising the hair, the cheeks, the breasts, the belly, the legs and the feet, as the horse-hukster praises the charms of his horses, and the poet P. Soutsos (*) those of his heroines,

At the end of the litany, the young couple again rode on, directing the paces of the beast of burden toward the monastery of Fulda, where Joanna was to be admitted to the flock of St. Benedict. Twelve full days the runaways spent, so that they ran through the thirty leagues between Moshava and Fulda by taking rest wherever they found shade, bathing in every stream, and carving their names on the trees which shaded their voluptuousness. The heat of the sun, of youth, of love, and above all, of the riding, made these frequent stops necessary. Besides, Frumentius knew the precise hagiography of these spots, so he could always find some pious pretense whenever they wished to dismount; at one time that they might pray before the tree where St. Thecla cured the blind by sprinkling their closed eyes with some drops of milk from her virginal breasts; and again, expressing the wish to kiss the soil upon which the blood of St. Boniface

(*) P. SOUTSOS : A Greek poet. (Tr. Note)

was shed, where from every drop there had grown an anemone, as from Adonis. Joanna would descend, smiling at her lover's requests, and the shepherds and husbandmen they met, would wonder at the beauty and piety of the two cowl-covered youths, and they would quickly remove their three-cornered hats and contend for the honor of first kissing their hands, or of offering them bread, cheese curd, beer and fruit. Sometimes they met half-naked Slavines who lived like reeds by the edges of the streams, exacting toll for passage from the travelers, sometimes throwing the peevish into the water. However, Frumentius disposed of them with a motet of St. Michael, which turned these amphibious bandits to flight.

One morning, while the young couple reposed beneath the shade of an old oak tree, resting upon the amorous laurels, or rather upon trefoils, (laurels never growing anywhere in Germany but on the heads of heroes), two women approached, their cheeks painted, their loose hair their only covering, and their feet bound with a light chain. These were sinners, canonized by the spiritual to go, naked and bound in chains, on the pilgrimage to the grave of St. Marcellinus, so to redeem their sins. These pious departures usually took place at the end of spring or in the beginning of summer, when the temperature allowed such paradisiacal dress. Most of these Magdalenes, knowing that every stain would be washed from them when they touched the holy relics, were not at all modest in their multiplication of sins along the way. They would ask hospitality from the peasants, and alms from the travelers, and recompensed these with that coin by which St. Mary, the Egyptian paid her fare, and their adamite dress made uninterrupted and handy such intercourses. So

the two female pilgrims, not being able to guess what was hidden under Joanna's cassock, came near to the lovers and asked for a few denaries, in return for which they promised to open to the two youths, the gates of heaven of the future and their bosoms in the present life. Frumentius, having Joanna before him as safe breastplate against every temptation, repulsed the impudent propositions of these satiated sirens with the cord of his belt, and withdrew from them, binding his friend tightly in his arms, as the hermits hugged the Cross whenever they were tempted by the demon of the flesh.

But yet these sainted hermits, while they turned away the one eye with fear from the devil, fixed the other on him with desire as well as horror, like the hungry Jew denying the ham. Frumentius, who as a genuine child of the West made use of enjoyment as an antidote against desire, was able to turn away both eyes without effort. The saints, sleepless, flagellated, and fasting until their mouths were filled with worms, rarely ever succeeded in repressing the tumult of those nights in which they struggled against the flesh, and of those days when they turned from the devil in woman's form. So the hens and she-goats withdrew from the hermitages as dangerous to their unbearable chastity. The Franks, however, after a little sacrifice, appeased the legate of lasciviousness so that they might afterwards, in tranquillity and calmness of soul, think about the salvation. St. Anthony quieted temptation with the cold bath, but according to the wise Archigenes, temperance is the most violent of the aphrodisiacal remedies; quite justly then, did the Franks expel such remedies from the monasteries.

The sun had already enlightened the longest day of the year and had long since set, when the two

travelers passing through the group of extinguishing volcanoes which surrounded the monastery of Fulda, at last set foot upon the monasterical lands. The night was moonless and gentle, and only the stars were reflected in the stream of the Fulda. But when the youths came nearer to the monastery, they saw a red glow between the trees that might have been the reflection of a fire. Foxes, deer, and large wild boar ran about them, apparently in great fear, and the nocturnal birds sought the darkness of the nest, as they fluttered in agitation above the lovers' heads. Joanna, trembling, clung to the breasts of her companion, and even the ass raised his ears uneasily, in circumspection and fear, as does the soldier of the Pope in the fire of battle. Columns of fire, clouds of smoke, sound of bells and songs, vapors of frankincense and the kitchen, shortly assailed the eyes, ears and the nose of our heroine, whose wonder and agitation grew with every step. The gaiety of Frumentius could not quiet her, and at her continual questioning, he would answer her with bursting laughs and kisses.

As we, unfortunately, cannot give you the same answer, good female reader, we wish to inform you that the day, or rather the night, was the 24th of June, the day on which, eight hundred years before, the head of St. John was presented to the daughter of Herodias, as reward for her dance, as casually as bouquet is given today to Esler or Taglioni. The bones of the saint, exhumed by St. Athanasius, were carried all over the world working miracles; as was the custom of the time. The head had been transported by some French monk from Alexandria to France, as the Franks of the Middle Ages were in the habit of snatching the relics of saints from the churches. as readily as their descendants today

appropriate the fragments of ancient art. A finger of St. Sergius, or a leg of St. Febronia were sold at a higher price at that time than the head of Hermes or an arm of Aphrodite can command today; and the highly valued head of St. John, which reposed in the monastery of St. Angelis, was used to cure fever instead of quinine by the inhabitants. The fame of this miraculous head gradually spread all over the West, and every year fires were lit in honor of the saint, much as the ancestors of these worshippers had lit torches for Paleion. The Goddess Pales had died long since, but her ancient worshippers continued to love wine, dancing and gay, sleepless nights, and for want of gods, they offered to those long-bearded and frowning saints of the Christian paradise, all the foyful worship formerly given to the hilarious, beardless inhabitants of Olympus.

The festival was at its height when the two travelers entered the courtyard of the monastery. Some of the monks were adding sheaves of stubble and empty barrels to the fire, while others, lifting up the hem of their cassocks, were jumping over the holy fire, and resorting to a ditch full of water whenever this bit their bare legs. Some others danced around the fires, or lay on grass dipping their fingers in the food pots and their cups in wine jars; while still others, holding aloft a burning firebrand, ran about the garden seeking a hawk to chase away the devils, or a four-leaved trefoil, which would make the infernal spirits subjects to the finder of the night. The merry monks received the returning brother and Joanna with cries of joy, and Frumentius presented Joanna to them as an orphaned relative, subject to the Duke Anshigar, who had found the chain of slave too heavy and wished to exchange it for a monastic cord.

«Dignus, dignus est intrare in mosto saneto corpori!» was the unanimous response of the Benedictines, as they dragged the newly converted Joanna to the rapid whirls of the circular dance, which twirled like a many--ringed snake around the highest of the fires. Thus Joanna, as soon as she entered the monastery was taught how to dance. However, at that time the dance, which is today forbidden by the spiritual as an invention of Satan, was then not in the least considered as impious or anti-religious, but was simply a prayer done with the feet, like the psalms with the lips, and as both were invented by the prophet King David, they were held to be as much related as legitimate children of the same father.

The stars turned pale in the sky, and the fires were dying when the bell forced the intoxicated and slumbering pot-companions to forsake the dance or the jar, that they might hasten to the matin. That morning, as always happened the day following a festival, deep sounding snortings resounded instead of hymns under the domes of the church, and so it was, they say, that it became the habit of the monks, even when quite soberly awake, to sing through their nostrils. This custom, though banished by the churches of the West, along with the festival of the Ass and other Gothic relics of the Middle Ages, took refuge with us, where it is preserved in all its integrity, and vividly constitutes reason for a daily desertion from the churches, cooling of devotion, and a less generous gift of alms from the orthodox. Religions are like women; both while they are young need neither beautification or rouge, in order to be surrounded by humble adorers who are prepared, both lover and primitive Christian, to sacrifice their lives for the objects of their devotion. But when they get old, it is necessary then to seek refuge in

seaweed and ornaments, to retain for a little more the scattered votaries. The Roman Church, sensing this truth, resorted to painters and sculptors as soon as she saw the ardor of her faithful cooling, just as the old woman Hera took to the girdle of Aphrodite in order to hide her wrinkles and clothe her nakedness. But the Eastern Church, even older than her sister, either from poverty or from pride, persisted in wanting to attract the faithful with nasal songs and squint-eyed virgins. Devotion long ago waned upon this earth, but the pictures of Raphael, and the voices of the Lacordaires or of the eunuchs of the Pope, still attract pilgrims under the domes of St. Peter or the Pantheon, though we may go but once a year to the services of the Church, to which we close our ears.

As soon as the matin ended, Frumentius hastened to guide Joanna to her new cage. The monastery of Fulda resembled a citadel rather than a fold of monks. High volcanoes, whose craters St. Sturn had extinguished with some drops of holy water, surrounded it on every side, and the current of the homonymous stream served as intrenchment for this monastic fortress ornamented with its towers and denticulated battlements. At that time the monks of St. Benedict liked, besides their wine and sleep, to take part in the political battles of the century, and whenever they were pursued by some royal power, they were well fortified behind the walls of the monastery, as the editors of today feel free to express themselves since they can take refuge behind the articles of the Constitution. The great Charles had, to a certain extent, tamed the habits of the furious monks by taking away all their weapons except the spirituals, but the monasteries still maintained their warlike dress.

Joanna visited the cells in line; the study room of the neophytes, the refectory decorated with monstrously-shaped statues of the twelve apostles, the underground prisons where the bad monks were buried alive, and finally the library, where sixty scribes worked day and night, some of them scraping off ancient manuscripts, while others recorded on that once valuable paper, the athletics of St. Babylas and Saintess Prisca, instead of the labors of Hercules and Hannibal. As for the garden it was sadly neglected, for the good fathers cared little about flowers, and actually detested vegetables for subverting precious space in the stomach, which they preferred to fill with the breasts of geese and the thighs of hogs, comparing these to the texts of the Scriptures in that within few words they contained much substance.

Having described the nest, we will now try to sketch a picture of its inmates. The monastic orders were so often multiplied, and so many names, such as Theatines, Recollecti, Carmelites, Johannines, Franciscans, Capuchins, Camaldolites, were given them; their habits and customs differed so often, including the barefooted and the sandalwearers, the bearded and the smoothe-shaven, those clothed in white, and those in black, the myrrh bearers and others, that the celebrated zoologist, Baron Born, attempted to distinguish them according to the Linnaeus system for animals and plants. On opening this Linnaeic Monachology, we find the word Benedictine arrayed against this description: «... face beardless, skull sheared, wears sandals, long black coat which extends to the feet, and a mantle that reaches the heels -- crows three or four times a day, and in the middle of the night, with hoarse voice .., eats everything, and seldom fasts».

Such were the chief characteristics ; besides these, the Benedictine monks of Germany wore scapulare of Panagia on their cowl to guard their heads from evil thoughts and lice, and their faces closely resembled the palimpsest monastical manuscripts wherein the amorous verses of Anacreon and Sappho could still be traced beneath the inscriptions of religious motets. Four times a day the good fathers did eat, instead of butter using pigs' fat, their fingers instead of a fork. Those who sinned were punished by being deprived of the pigs' fat for some weeks, as communion is sometimes forbidden today. Twice in the month they were shaved ; on Good Friday, all washed their feet, and thrice in the year the father were phlebotomized, in order to sedate the foul desires, or, according to some other chroniclers, so to prevent apoplexy. Most of them were ignorant, but some understood the «Our Father», and others knew how to write; and to these last were provided, as were Homer's heroes, with double portion at the table, and wine instead of beer. All were sanctified on the Sabbath day, but since it is not known at which day God rested after completing the world, and being afraid that they might fall into an error, they remained idle the whole week. Finally the constitution of these monks grew so vigorous, that many of them died standing up, as did the Russian soldiers, some saying it was necessary for these to be pushed before they would fall.

The shepherd of this cowl - bearing flock, was, at that time, the illustrious St. Rabanus, the Black, whose opinion had more drawers than could be found in the laboratory of an apothecary. This wise abbot had sailed all the seas, at least as many as any traveler of his time, was well versed in all the living and dead dialects of the period, and besides

these, knew Astronomy, Witchcraft, the Canonical law, and Obstetrics. For the last, he had invented some special artifice by which the unborn babes were baptized in their mothers' wombs so that in case of miscarriage, they would escape the dark kingdoms where the unbaptized children are left with the unburied pagans by the banks of the Styx. At the time that Joanna entered the monastery, St. Rabanus, aged now, and suffering from dyspepsia, was busy about his salvation, restricting himself to the eating of vegetables, much as Nebuchadnezzar became more abstemious during the last days of his life... that is, when he was changed to a bull. Rabanus also composed songs for the honor of the Cross, each one of these consisting of thirty verses, each verse of an equal number of letters arranged in the shape of a cross, using the same plan as the French poets who arranged their bacchanalian songs in the shape of a bottle or a barrel. The copying of these masterpieces required a skilled calligrapher, and none could compete with Frumentius and the new brother, John in this work. So the cassock-wearer hymnist entrusted his poetical crosses to them, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Frumentius to Joanna, saying that «we will dip the pen in the same inkwell».

The happy lovers resembled the fortunate multitude in that they had no history; and the life of our monks flew unruffled and placid under the shadow of the monastery, like the stream of the Fulda under the overshadowing, ancient poplar trees. Have you ever thought, my reader, how sweet and comfortable it would be to have the beloved wearing a man's clothes and to you alone unveiling her charms? You would know neither jealousy nor the innumerable thorns which, according to St. Basil,

make women laboratories of tortures. Her manly dress would guard her safer than the keys of the turkish harems and those precautionary belts with which the Italians secure their conjugal possessions from every incursion. And besides these, neither the face of your dearest would be sullied by shameless looks, nor her ears by licentious words, or her hands by touching. But she would be pure and clean, as the wings of the angels, and as that ideal virgin whom St. Basil dreamed stood like a modest statue upon the basis of her virginity, and firm to every imagination and contact. The jealous sighs of Tibullus and Byron's blasphemies against women would be to you inconceivable, like the lamentations of Jeremiah to one who never lamented. Such was Joanna for Frumentius, a rose without thorns, a fish without bones, a cat without nails. From childhood living with men, she had neither the peculiarities nor those charming defects which make the daughters of Eve more fearful than those sirens who were snakes from their waists down.

Seven years passed since the youths entered the monastery of Fulda, and Fate continued spinning interwoven golden days for them, and their relation remained secret and unmolested like a pearl in the deepest recesses of the sea. Nor was there any danger of the fraud being discovered, as no Frank before the Crusades ever thought to examine what was concealed under those complicated foldings of the platonic phraseologists. The barber of the monastery alone would sometimes joke with brother John, smiling when he presented a beardless cheek for the razor, smooth as a lake in time of calmness.

But beside Joanna, there was, unfortunately, another beardless monk in Fulda; a father Corvinus, whom all avoided because his surname was that of

the ill-omened bird. (*) This unhappy Benedictine as a young man had loved the niece of the bishop of Mogontia, to whom he served as beacon, holding the tail of his purple robe of ceremonies, and drinking the water in which his holiness washed his hands after the communion. The young lady opened her ears, and shortly her bosoms, for the love of the young deacon, but her mitred guardian, one night apprehending the youths as they cut off the forbidden fruit in the garden of the Bishopric, punished them by cutting off the hair of the niece, and sending Corvinus, after making him...neuter, to the monastery of Fulda to mourn for his sin. The young monk during the first days lamented his loss, as the daughter of Jephthah lamented her virginity, but time at last healed the wounds of his body and soul, and gradually he came to despise women, and urged his comrades to acquire Paradise safely by the same sacrifices he endured, much as the amputated fox of the fable advised the others to amputate their tails as well. Such was the philosophical life the good Corvinus led, substituting the desire for forbidden fruit with good meats and the expectation of Paradise, when one day, having received orders to hunt the besieging wood fretters of the abbot's library, he found there a translation of St. Basil's sermon on *virginity*. Opening the book, in which he hoped to find new reasons to extol the Highest since all means of ruin had been cut off, he dropped by bad luck into that passage wher the sainted bishop of Caesaria advises the modest virgins against «masculine bodies, even if they are eunuchs, be on guard of them». Continuing on this subj-ct, he remarks that the bull whose horns are cut off remains no less horned by nature,

(*) Corvus, from which in Latin means crow. (Au. Note)

and strikes all those he meets with that side of the head where the horns were before. Thus, too, the amputated, inflamed by strange madness, can yet ... But here I refer the reader to the treatise of the saint, where he may find the end of the phrase. According to the critics, Tasso's «Jerusalem» was written on a shield, and it seems to me that St. Basil's treatise on virginity must have been written on the knees of some good virgin.

That reading disturbed the so many years rested monk. The snakes, dragons, wolves, panthers and other animals with which the theologians picture the passions, awoke, crowded and started to roar and bite their tails in the deepest recesses of his heart, which again resembled a noisy menagerie. Archimedes, revelling with joy, vociferated «Eureka!» after the solution of his problem, and our Benedictine monk began to run about the cloisters of the monastery vociferating «I can!» in a mighty voice. From that day forth he was seized with a strange monomania, which neither the whip nor poor food, or the cold bath, or any other prescription of the monestical pharmacy would cure. Wholly revived by the god-fearing eloquence of the divine Basil, he held the book in his arms day and night, as a young mother holds her first born child. Sometimes he kissed its pages, and at others he learned the sacred words by heart; and whenever he saw a woman he ran to her, like a thirsty deer to a spring in the desert, in order to test by experience the words of the saint. But the blonde young women of Saxony evaded him even though amputated, in accord with the thoughtful counsel of the bishop of Caesaria. Yet I think that even without this counsel, a few of these, knowing his defects, would have wated for him,

Such was the one who was destined to break the golden thread with which the friendly Moera sewed together the days of the lovers, making their life a chaplet of glittering and perfect pearls. Every night Frumentius and Joanna would enter a cave near the monastery, which in ancient times had been the sanctuary of Priapus. That god was still worshipped in Germany under the name of St. Vitus, though the ceremonies had not changed with the name. The lips of the Christian women were continually seeking from him what the immodest idolatresses had sought before, pleasures or the happiness of children, and the good saint seldom turned a deaf ear to such prayers. But it is necessary to state that it was the custom to erect his statues in the shadow of a male monastery; this, as some virulent historians have said, made certain the success of the pilgrims.

In the depths of that holy cave, behind the wooden statue of the saint, the young couple had knitted their nest with sweet smelling leaves of saplings, fox's skins and soft textures left as saintly dedications by the devoted mistresses of Saxony. Above their couch there hung, like stalactites, smoked tongues, fat hams, dry fishes, leather bottles of strong wine from Moselle, and other provisions to which the youths took refuge whenever they grew exhausted singing hymns to the honor of St. Vitus; since devotion to this saint, like that to Aphrodite, cools without the gifts of Demeter and Bacchos.

There they were, in that inauspicious night, enjoying all the good things, while their brother Corvinus could not find sleep, and who, having abandoned the poor like parasites, wandered in the fields telling his tortures to the moon. But even the

moon, so it seems, wearied of the monotonous complaints of the needy cassock-wearer, and hid behind the black clouds, so that the admirer of the great Basil was soon forced to seek shelter in the sanctuary of St. Vitus.

The thin sand which covered the pavement of the cave to protect the tender feet of the female pilgrims, as only the barefooted could enter there, covered the sound of his steps as he advanced unobserved to the cavity where the two lovers were taking rest in each other's arms and in those of Morpheus. The bed chamber was illuminated under the lamp that burned before the icon of the Christianized Priapus, and Joanna appeared beneath it, half-naked like the goddess of Olympos? and beautiful like them. So charming was the picture she made that before her even St. Amoun would have forgotten his vows, Origen his misfortunes, and even Themistocles the victory of Miltiades. And Father Corvinus, forgetting for his part the sleeping Frumentius, rushed to place under the hazard of experience, the physiological theorems of the bishop of Caesaria. But St. Vitus who protected the sleep of the lovers resting under his shelter, could not tolerate the pollution of his mysteries by a mean eunuch. And when he saw him laying his isolent hand upon his sleeping slave, his cheeks reddened in anger, like those of Loreto's Panagias whenever they kissed her impious lips, and his head shook in a threatening manner, while the oil of the lamp boiled with violence. A drop of that simmering oil, falling on the cheek of Frumentius awoke him; and rising instantly he saw his companion still half sleeping and struggling against the lying Corvinus, as if from a bad dream. Frumentius, like a true descendant of Vitikend, was enraged, and as vigo-

rous as any German monk accustomed to using his fists in every argument, be it ever so theological. Therefore, losing no time for useless explanations, he grasped the rope of his girdle and let it rise and fall vigorously upon the back of the miserable Corvinus. Meanwhile Joanna rose and rushed to hide the motives under her cassock, while the two monks continued boxing and blood began to run, though luckily only from the nose. After obstinate struggle, Corvinus, badly beaten in the hands of the exasperated rival, succeeded in escaping, leaving a piece of his cowl to Frumentius as spoil of war, as Joseph left a bit of his mantle to Potiphar's wife... though the resemblance between Jacob's son and Corvinus ends here, I think.

Left alone again on the battle field, the two lovers stared at each other in anguish, for they were certain that the beaten satyr would hasten to betray their cave's secrets. It was necessary then, in order to avoid prison and poor food, to bid farewell to that hospitable place, in which they had spent so many delightful days enjoying each other and the rich provisions, in sacred quietness and idleness. The years and the luxury had mitigated the adventurous spirit of the two monks, who now looked with horror on the labours and privations of the wandering life, sharing the opinion of St. Anthony that monasteries were for the monks, as the sea for the fishes, and like these, which perish when they leave the water, so do the monks languish and fade when they leave the monasteries.

To such sad thoughts they were surrendering themselves, when the bell of the matin reminded them of the imminent danger. The night was dark, but the stables were nearby, where there still lived that good ass who, seven years before, had conveyed

Joanna to Fulda. This patriarch of the monastic stall, now white as snow with old age, reposed surrounded by his descendats and bundles of trefoil. The runaways, untying him, and wrapping flax around his horse shoes, so to avoid noise, much as the pirates cover their boat oars, they departed from the walls of that blessed monastery, trembling lest their humble companion, the ass, awake the living with his braying, as seven years before he had awakened the dead from their graves.

PART THREE

«But the fact is, that I have
nothing plann'd. Unless it
were to be a moment merry».
(BYRON, Don Juan, Canto IV).

Do you, my reader, love good wine? If you really love it, you certainly hate those unprincipled tavern-keepers who adulterate the good beverage for dishonest gains by mixing it with water, dyes or poisons, and so, instead of a divine nectar, offer an insipid or loathesome drink to thirsty lips. Such tavern-keepers existed for centuries as the professed dispensers of the *courageous wine of the faith*, as the learned Albinus called religion. Thus, the similarity between tavern-keepers and the priests of Christianity appertains to some synod of the ninth century, so my expressions, if not polite, at least are *canonical*.

They said then that, as the true winebibber loathes the adulterators of the wine, thus too, the good Christian detests those who mix with religion, to make it profitable, the various customs and inventions such as shaved or very hairy heads, the miracles of the icons, the gods of paganism disguised as saints, the bowings, the tickets to Paradise, the holy relics, the rosaries and other priestly merchandise with which the professions of the Apostles are rendered more quackish than those of the medical practitioners and interpreters of dreams. From childhood I have liked chemistry, and this book of

mine is only a chemical analysis of the religious wine which the cassock - wearing tavern - keepers of the Middle Ages gave to the peoples of the West to drink. All the pesty animals, such as snakes, wasps, mosquitoes and scorpions, become so much more venomous and depraved as long as they live in the sun. Only priests are exempted from this rule, for they, when they lived in the sunless lands of the West, acquired sharp nails and virulent teeth, and in the East became gradually harmlees and tamed, like the eels of Kopais. And since, like these eels, they are not good for eating, neither for biting, like the Franks, but quietly and honestly pursue their profession, frequently making the sign of the cross, burning incense, baptizing and hearing confessions, it would be a sin if someone were to molest these innocent heirs to the kingdom of Heaven. I say this to you, my reader, so that you will be convinced of my orthodoxy, and now I will return to my heroes.

After the death of the great Charles, neither post stations nor gendarmes could be found any more in Germany; and Saxon horses were as fat and sluggish as they are today, so that our lovers, mounted on their faithful ass, were little fearful of pursuit.

This animal was one of the descendants of the blessed ass which carried Jesus into Jerusalem, and according to the great Albert, the sign of the Cross was left on its back, just as the image of the divine face was imprinted on the veil of Veronica. All the descendants of this ass may be distinguished by the black line which intersects crosswise at the center of their backs, and in the Middle Ages they were called crusaders, though in case of need, even the hunting dogs could compete with them for speed. The breed was used only by abbots and prelates in Europe, where it gradually became extinct, though

it still thrives, unmixed and vigorous, in Egypt and Palestine, where one can see the creatures wearing gold embroidered saddles, and eating boiled beans from royal pots.

Upon such a beast of burden, the runaways traveled safely, and as they journeyed, they discussed innumerable plans for their future life. The sun rose shortly, warm and cloudless, behind the summits of Biberstein, and ripened the ideas which sprang from their heads. They soon decided that they would perambulate the world upon their ass, asking hospitality from the powerful, extending their hands to the lips of the faithful, and leaving to others the responsibility of Christianizing the infidels. The youths began their wanderings by directing their steps to Mogontia, in order to be present at the ceremony of the reconciliation of the emperor Louis and his sons. But when, after three days' journey, they arrived in that city, mourning psalmodies and tedious bells resounded from all parts instead of merry songs. And instead of the smell of roasted meats, the evaporations of funereal frankincense infected the atmosphere. The unfortunate Louis the Pious, or the Debonnair, (these two surnames were attributed to him indifferently as synonymous (*)), had surrendered his mild soul to the creator the preceding day, saying, «I forgive my sons, like the condemned man his executioners», and at the end, his body was dragged to his last dwelling by four black horses. The latter had been left fasting for three days and therefore progressed sadly, like the horses of Hippolytos, between a double line of torch-bearing priests who extolled the virtues of the

(*) The historics sometimes call him Louis le Pieux, other times Louis le Dehonnaire. (Au. Note)

late departed. The last ritual was observed chiefly because Louis had bequeathed Sardinia, Corsica and Sicily to the Church. It is true that these islands, property of the Saracens and Greeks, were no more his than Cypros and Jerusalem belong to the King of Italy today (*). However, his good intention was worthy of incense and procession. Frumentius and Joanna drew their cowls down over their faces as they walked together with the late ruler on that road which according to Bion, is the smoothest of all (because we found her even with closed eyes). Later they departed in silence from the walls of the mourning Mogontia.

With the vanishing of the pious Louis, the air of Germavy was not as healthy as before for the lungs of the monks, many of whom began to emigrate, much as the gouty English forsook Nice after its annexation to France, saying that it was Italian, and not French air, that their doctors ordered them to breathe. The sons of Charles protested with weapons for the paternal inheritance, and their elder, Lothaire, wishing to attract the Saxons, made use of corruption, much as our Ministers make use of it, and allowed them to raise again the ancestral idols, even sanctioning the occasional sacrifice of some fanatic preacher, or fat Benedictine before the paternal altars. Some slandering Annalists have noted particularly the practice of the ungodly Lothaire of manufacturing idols of Irminsul and Teuton in the palaces, later sending these as conciliating presents to the Saxons and Thuringians. However, even in our own times, the English manufacturers send statues of the Hindu or Australian idols to their co-

(*) The kings of Sardinia were using, as known, the title of king of Cypros and of Jerusalem. (Au. Note)

lonies ; statues that have been carved in the factories of London by pious Puritans and Quakers. These statues are loaded on the same boat with many copies of the Bible texts to serve as an antidote, and both idols and Testaments are sent on a good voyage under the protection of the English flag.

The quarrels between the heirs of Louis, in a very short time made Germany uninhabitable. The wretched ass of the lovers, stumbled upon corpses at every step, or else slipped in bloody ponds ; and it was reduced to grinding thistles and brambles between its hungry teeth, as there was no longer any access to barley, grass and leaves. Winter came on, a Saxon winter, so harsh and bitter that even the crows, though dying from hunger, were not able to tear off the flesh of the corpses, because they were so numbed with cold. The unfortunate runaways strayed like homeless sparrows on the snow, and cursed that mutilated satyr who forced them to abandon their warm and odoriferous nest. The fear of enemies, and the bitterness of the winter, had cooled the hospitality of the Saxons, so the monks knocked in vain upon the doors of the sheds and cenobies. Sometimes they received no answer, and at others, a Saxon's head, red from cold, or ghastly pale from fear, would pop out of a small door, exhorting the suppliants to continue on their way ; and rarely was there a hand more merciful than the head to throw them even a piece of black bread or some dried fish. Thus they wandered for two whole months, following the footsteps of the troops like ravens, in order to warm themselves by the flame of a half-extinguished fire, or to lick the bones of an abandoned table. And a day came when they stared with envy at the jackals as they mangled the corpses of some of Lothaire's soldiers, almost justifying the opinion of

the wise Chrysippos who instructed his pupils, among other things, that it is lawful to eat the dead in default of other food.

Joanna endured these miseries of hunger and cold without murmuring, as the camel of the desert endures the heat and thirst. Neither sighs nor complaints ever issued from those pale lips, which sometimes kissed away the tears of her companion, and Frumentius often took occasion to bless the moment which threw this blonde pearl into the stream of his life. The character of women can be compared only to that copper of Corinth, which, though containing many alloys, still holds some pure gold. Thus, fasting, shedding tears, consoling each other, and blowing their fingers to warm them, always heading toward the south, like the martins and the consumptive English women, these two finally passed over the snow-capped deserts of the Bavarians, sailed through the lake of Constantia, and found hospitality at last in the monastery of Saint Gallus, where the good monks offered them asylum against the wolves and the soldiers of Lothaire. The two youths prepared to set up their tutelaries under that sacred and inexpugnable roof, when some curious monk, observing Joanna cautiously, saw that her ears were pierced, and troubled with this observation, he at once conceived strange suspicions and desires. The end of a woman's ear was enough to disturb the peace of the monks in those days, while today, just the fragrance of a woman's letter is enough to arouse all the inhabitants of the Sacred Mountain (*). And Joanna, fearing future discoveries and demands from the Holy Father,

(*) SACRED MOUNTAIN: Mount Athos. (Tr. Note).

induced Frumentius to leave the fold of the curious Swiss, the very same day.

From Saint Gallus they went to Tegern, the oldest city in Switzerland, famous for the strength of its inhabitants and its brandy. Thence on to Lucerne, which they entered at night, so as to admire the wonderful lamp, which, according to the Chroniclers, possessed such brightness that it made the stars invisible, and those ditches visible into which the travelers might have fallen. From Lucerne, they went direct to Aventicum, the capital of the former Ellwangers, where they saw the footprints of Attila engraved upon a rough rock, as those of Jesus were stamped upon the Mountain of Olives, and thence on to Sedunum, where they found a skiff in which they sailed the Rhodanus to Lugdunum.

This skiff belonged to Jewish merchants on their way to Marseilles to sell Christian slaves to the Saracens of Spain. In those days the descendants of Israel, instead of being oppressed, were powerful in southern France. The emperor borrowed large sums from them daily, and paid the interest on his debts by allowing them to proselytize his subjects, like we who tolerate the Sisters of Mercy, the Scriptures of the Bible Society, the visions of Agathangelus, the golden promises we are offered, and other inventions of our three *Guarantors* (*). The Jews of Lugdunum used the decrees which were bought from the emperor as teeth with which they devoured the Christians. They killed their pigs, stole their children, forced their slaves to make Saturday holy, and to work on Sunday, sold the disobedient as

(*) THREE GURANTORS. France, England and Russia being the powers accomplishing the independence of Greece in 1830. (Tr. Note).

slaves, or baptized their offspring, even undertaking occasionally to hebraize the concubines of the bishops. The unfortunate bishops sent one petition after another to the emperor, and the Jews purse after purse of gold. But the monarch did not even answer the petitioners but would dispatch soldiers to the Jews, to guard their homes and compel their debtors to pay their debts, following the same office as the Christian policeman who are engaged to imprison the debtors of the Jews. Unjust is our accusation that this century is more covetous than the past ones. Gold has existed from the very beginning as the most estimable God upon earth, and its prophets are the Jews. In the past, of course, even the Gospel was written in gold letters, so as to inspire the respect of the faithful.

Among the passengers of the boat was an old rabbi named Isahar, who, in order to amuse himself during the voyage, undertook to proselytize the young monks. This unprincipled usurer sought to take their souls from them instead of fare. He began by recounting the talmoudical myths, according to which Jesus was a clever sorcerer who taught thaumaturgy through some magician named John the Baptist, and he had promised the daughter of the Emperor Tiberius to make her a mother without a male's interference. The maid, following his precepts, bore a stone instead of a child, and the emperor was so enraged that he ordered Pilate to crucify this miraculous preacher. The body of Jesus, according to this tale, was later buried near the aqueduct and carried away at night by the overflowing water, and from this arose the conviction of the Nazarenes about the Resurrection. After this and other blasphemous fooleries were emitted from his impure mouth, the filthy-minded Jew began to weave

a crown of clouds and stars for the god of Israel. He represented him seated upon a chariot, drawn by four panthers, like the one of Bacchos, while he held a thousand cubit long tube in his right hand, and he used this tube as trumpet through which he announced his commandments to the prophets. And this god brought forth arms-bearing demons from his head, much as Zeus brought forth the panoplied Athena; and he was on good terms with the letters of the alphabet, which were winged angels, and he ground manna with a monstrous millstone, which made diaphonous bread for the inhabitants of paradise. The two youths sometimes laughed as they listened to those wonderful rabbinical stories, yet sometimes they feared lest these blasphemies sink the boat to the deepest recesses of the seas. So they muttered as an antidote, a motet to Saint Medardus, who, like the Poseidon of our ancestors and like Saint Nicolaus of ours, rose up and calmed the waves of the waters.

By grace of the motet and the calm seas, the boat anchored happily on the following day in Lugdunum, where Agobardo, only saint of those times, presided as bishop, and the hem of whose robe I, too, would like to have kissed in respect. This man believed that, since Jesus is eternal and everywhere present, all those who followed his commands, whether they were born before his incarnation or after, whether they knew him or not, were Christians and rightful heirs to the kingdom of Heaven. He rejected the rendering of adoration the sacred icons, reckoning as impious the representation of the immaterial godhead in human form; and he taught that the first Christians maintained icons of Jesus, the Apostles and the Martyrs, not as objects of superstitious worship, but as resemblances of human beings whom they

knew and loved-much as we today cherish the photographs of absent friends. The good bishop also held it ridiculous to believe that the Highest dictated every word of the Scriptures, such as the apothegm to the angel in regard to the ass of Balaam. Averting the faithful from bowings, he ordered their alms to be given to the poor and not to the churches, for he did think it a sin that while so many poor were deprived of their paltry obolus to buy bread, gold should be given to the priests that they might light candles in midday, or with it decorate the idols of the temples (*) and the breasts of their concubines.

Such Christian, or rather everlasting truths, taught that good priest of the Highest that had he preached later, he most certainly would have been burned like Huss, or been thrown unlamented and unburied upon a rock like Kairis(**). But at that time the priests of the West were engaged with debauchery and extortion, and had not yet been seized with a mania to judge and burn human beings. And if, in the midst of that general ignorance and corruption, there came one of those consumed with the wayward desire to live virtuously, or to speak rationally, the priests divided the share that would have gone to him, laughed at what they considered his absurdity, bestowing on him the title of Saint, a term as libe-

(*) In the churches of the Westerners besides the icons they have also statues of Panagia, dressed in silken gowns and adorned with ear-rings. (Au. Note).

(**) THEOPHILOS KAIRIS: A Greek philosopher (1784-1853), condemned and anathematized by the Church. His books were burned by authority of the Church, the Church having as much power in Greece as the State. After his death the body was left unburied, the Church forbidding burial because of his contempt. (Tr. Note).

rally conferred in those days, as is the degree of doctor to the most casual practitioner today. Of these rare disciples was Agobardo, a diamond in the middle of gravel, swan in the midst of crows, glittering in the darkness of the ninth century like a pearl on the nose of a swine (*). Meeting him, while with labour and disgust I examined the mud of the ninth century, I wanted to rest for a few moments near him, like the weary Arab by the spring of the desert.

Fruméntius went with Joanna to kiss the hands of the bishop. The travelers in those days, on arriving in a strange city, sought the bishop's residence as today they seek the consulate. There they would deliver their letters of introduction and ask for instructions or help for continuation of their journey, for which service they usually offered the bishop some sacred relics of their country's saints; as the habit was in flower among the Christians of those times to make collections of sacred relics of every country and epoch, much as we collected stamps a few years ago in Athens.

Our wayfarers, who had much to ask for but nothing to offer to his Holiness, appeared before him blushing and coyish; but Saint Agobardo, accustomed, as are the spiritualists and doctors, to examining kidneys and hearts, knew also how to discern the value hidden under their rags. Inviting to his frugal table the much suffered couple, he admired the beauty of the young guests, their knowledge and brotherly love, comparing them as to Gastor and Polydeuces, and when they took their leave he gave them good advices, new shoes, his

(*) Proverbs, 11, 22. (Au. Note).

blessing and money for the continuation of their journey.

Sailing again from Rhodanus after six days, the travelers arrived at Arelate, the one-time famed capital of Constantine the Great, and now celebrated for its sausages and women, the latter being indebted for their beauty, (as are the English horses), to their intermixture with the Arabs. The two travelers, after admiring the ruins of the imperial house, the metropolis, the amphitheatre and the obelisk, felt the necessity of taking care of their stomachs, which had been empty for a long time, like the temple of Athena, before which they stood at that moment. So they directed their steps to the women's monastery there, which was the oldest one in France, been established by Saint Caesarius in the sixth century. Caesarius wrote with his blood, so they say, the really draconian regulation: No stranger. man or woman, was permitted entrance to the monastery, and the nuns were not permitted to project their heads through the little doors. As for those who bathed their bodies, combed their hair and showed their teeth in laughter, or moved their feet; these were lashed with the cowhide or were chained and thrown into the subterranean prisons. But it was impossible for the voluptuous damsels of Provence to submit to such laws for a long time. The miserable virgins withered in the cenobium, as the plants do in the cases of the botanist, until they trod under their sandals their old abbess and the ferocious canons of Saint Caesarius, recovering along with their liberty, their former colour and vivacity. After this they were governed by their own constitutions, and they erected a theatre in the monastery, went out twice weekly, and fasted whenever their teeth hurt. When the pious Louis attempted to bring back these strayed

lambs of an ewe under the yoke of Saint Benedict, they answered in complete council that only to their abbess did they owe submission. As for fastings and chastity, they would observe these as much as they could, but not with oath or promise, as they would be afraid, so they said, lest to add to the sin of the flesh, the one of perjury. Such was the condition at that time of most Parthenothrophoea (*) in Europe. Saint Peter Damianos called them «Parthenophthoroea.» (**)

The sun forgot, as often happens in Provence, that it was yet winter, and warmed from mid-heaven the slabs of the monastery's courtyard, when the two travelers appeared at the entrance. The portress snored by the open gate, which the adventurers passed through and for some moments they wandered amidst the deserted cloisters and silent corridors, coming at last to the dormitory where, according to the custom of the warm countries, the lonely virgins were napping. Matted curtains guarded the eyelids of the sleepers from the midday sun, and the semi-light made still more gracious these cassock-wearing Aphrodites. Among these brides of Jesus there were, as in the harem of the Sultan, virgins of every nationality and every color; red haired girls of Switzerland, white, like the milk of their goats, and serene, like their country's lakes; newly converted Saracens, with hair black as coal, and as warm; genial Galatians and mountaineer shepherdesses of the Pyrenees. The bed room of the cenobium resembled those botanical gardens where flowers of every kind, different in

(*) PARTHENOTROPHOEIA: Schools for the education of girls. (Tr. Note).

(**) PARTHENOPHTHOROEA: Places for the corruption of girls. (Tr. Note).

color, scent, and nativity, but fraternal in beauty, bloomed as captives within a glazen prison.

One of the sleeping, possessed by an effeminate dream, smiled, as she supported her burning cheek upon her arm, while her tempestuous bosoms appeared through the white dress like the moon behind a cloud. Another, pale and frowning, resembled a statue of the sleeping Grief, perhaps in her sleep seeing the shores of her country or her mother's lips. Still another was extending her hands for the abbess' stick, and another opened her arms to her heavenly suitor. Yet the most slept peacefully and some snored, but these were old women dreaming of the happiness of Paradise.

The two travelers, forgetting their hunger, admired these varied personifications of Morpheus, when suddenly there sounded the call of the silvery cock, which adorned the clock in this bedroom. The clock had been donated by a Saracen prince for the hospitality of the monastery, (which according to evil tongues, had offered him pleasures rivaling those of his palace) and it was a masterpiece of Arabian art. At the sound, a multitude of black, blue, gray, and brown eyes, shaking off sleep, sparkled like stars in the semi-light of the room, and were fixed with curiosity upon the unexpected strangers. The nuns of those times were neither prudes nor timid, and besides, our heroes gaze held nothing fearful. On the contrary, brother Frumentius was as vigorous and vivid as the white lily of Holland, and John was as the violet of the meadow, pleasant and tender. The lonely virgins, wearing their nightly veils, pushed together white and turbulent, as the waves of the sea about the young monks, asking who they were and how they arrived in this bedroom. After satisfying their curiosity, took care to satisfy

the strangers' hunger, inviting them to sit together at the dinner table, where, for the first time, our children of the North tasted the sweet fruit of the south, the figs and the raisins about which the learned Joanna inquired, licking her lips and fingers, as if these were the sweet fruit of the lotus.

For three months the two lovers rested amidst the hospitable virgins, to whom the canons allowed *gardeners and spirituals to govern their souls and water their monastical gardens*, as the good chroniclers have recorded. The latter could not have guessed how many misunderstandings and filthy puns this phrase engendered, at least among the enemies of religion, though to my harmless pen it becomes a harmless phrase. Everything went beautifully for Frumentius and Joanna at the beginning; both fatted and forgot their country under that sweet sky of Provence, which today makes even the Chians forget their sweet-smelling island. «Wherever there is good, there is the country», said Euripides(*). Everywhere is produced the sweet honey of the lotus, offered in various forms to the insatiable lips of mortals, as the throne to the kings and as the good virgins to the lovers, as the gold to the merchants, and as applause to the artists. And lotus once grew even in the snow-covered summits of the mountains and amidst the sands of the desert when hermits went there to seek holiness, and sinners sought their freedom. But today, the lotus has become a garden plant, common as the leek, and perhaps this is the reason the poets banished it from Helicon.

We said then, that the two monks, finding easy

(*) Πατρις ἐστὶν ἵνα πᾶντοι τις εὔ. (Au. Note).

comfort again, fatted and lived satisfied in the female fold. But in a short time, Joanna was seized by some unknown dreadful illness. Her cheeks became hollow, the eyes turbid and dull as the stars in the morning. Instead of food, she ate her finger nails, and instead of sleeping, she moaned all night. Her companion continually asked her what was the matter, but she answered only with tears and grumblings, and whenever he approached to kiss her, instead of her cheek, she turned her back to him; and sometimes it was to Sister Martha, at other times to holy Bathilde, or again to some other virgin, that she sent him, angrily advising him to kiss them. Cood Frumentius, accustomed to obey all the orders of his friend, ran to execute her command, but when he returned to ask reward for his prompt obedience, the poor youth was offered insults instead of thanks, and nails instead of lips.

Describing the symptoms, it is useless, I think, to name the illness. The position of my poor heroine was rather so pitiful, in so far as she was weakened from sleepless jealousy, that she could not even render the same gifts to her lover, but left the nuns to heap up conjectures over conjectures, seeking to guess what strange madness possessed that blonde and beautiful monk who not only avoided their caressings, but was even enraged at his companion whenever he was seen talking to them.

At the beginning of this century, all the diseases attributed to the irritation of the stomach and under the name of gastritis, were cured without exception with leeches by the sanguinary Broussais. And in the ninth century, all the diseases of soul and body were attributed to the presence of devils, against whom the only remedies were exorcisms, and the touch of the relics of the saints. Theology and

medical art, from which we expect the salvation of our soul and body, are the only sciences, if they can be so-called, that change fashions as often as women's clothes. All that our ancestors believed, we call mythology. and even the medico-barbers ridicule the prescriptions of Galen and Paracelsus. God alone may know what our descendants will say as they read, either the memoirs about *colour perspiration* (*) from the academy of medicine of Paris, or the treatise of Pope Pius about the immaculate conception of Saint Anna, and about the wonders of *pepsine*, and of the taumatourgical icon of Tenos(**).

A monastical council was held, resolving to send Brother John for a cure to the Saint Bona's cave of Saint Magdalene. At this place there grew a tree, the scent of which drove away the devils, and cured the blind during that period, even as the smell of fishes was efficacious in the times of Tobit(***). Good Frumentius mounted his devil-possessed friend upon his faithful beast of burden and directed his steps to the cave. He would turn back frequently and curse the eunuchs and evils who expelled him to new shores every day, his curses resembling those of Jesus upon the Jewish shoemaker.

Jealousy, when it is not an idiopathical or

(*) Unknown disease up to 1862, its mark was black sweat running from the eyelids and originating from the ruin of the humours or according to other scientists from some black paint, which the patients placed between the eyelids. See the various articles about it in the Gazette des Hopitaux of the above year. (Au. Note).

(**) ICON OF TENOS: An icon of Panagia at the Island of Tenos, famous even today for its cures. The translator heard of none who lived in misery after the pilgrimage, for the reason that they either died or committed suicide. (Tr. Note).

(***) Tobit, 6, 7, 8. (Au Note).

constitutional (*) disease, as is the hunting after offices in Greece, while it is always a bad and troublesome disease, yet stops the very moment its actuating causes disappear, much as seasickness will disappear as soon as the boat stops. And so the wicked devil who tormented our heroine, was appeased as soon as the facilities for sharpening its nails and teeth were left behind. Before arriving in the middle of the road, Joanna had recovered her appetite and cheerfulness, so there was little left for the saintess to do to effect a complete cure.

Dismounting after three days' journey, they found themselves at the foot of that mountain, at the summit of which was the cave they sought. The monks began their laborious ascent of the steep incline followed by their ass, while the latter, having fasted and hastened since the preceding day, shook its head as if it were weary of its miserable life. The first parents of that unfortunate animal had perhaps eaten some forbidden barley in a corner of paradise, and their descendants may be paying, as we are, the toll of the ancestral offence. Finally, after two hours' ascension, the three pilgrims stepped upon a plateau planted with trees, in the center of which stood the shadowy cave where the blonde daughter of Gennesaret had mourned her sins for thirty years. In the middle of the cave there was a pit that had been washed into the rock by the tears of the saintess, tears that were later distributed by the abbess among the poor after they had been transformed into pearls. And near the pit rested the body of the saintess, placed there by saints Lazarus, Trophimus, and Maximinus, monks who had sought refuge in France, as the followers of Manzini today

(*) Constitunnel. (Au. Note).

seek refuge in Great Britain. A fragrant and evergreen shrub shaded the grave, signifying to the pilgrims where it was proper to kneel. The lovers knelt, and began in a low voice to sing the hymn of that purified concubine whose sins made more sinners out of women than her repentance had served to inspire them to chastity. We are all ambitious to imitate the faults of the great men in some way, whenever we are unable to imitate their virtues. Many become drunkards in order to have something in common with Alexander; the courtiers of Louis removed their teeth so to resemble the monarch, but the faults of the beautiful Magdalene attracted ten thousand times more imitators. The few good Christian females that remain, establish her as idol and prototype of their lives, and bite the forbidden fruit while they have genuine teeth, then later offer to God their sets of teeth and their wigs for the price of Paradise.

While the two pilgrims invoked the graces of the saintess, the ass, which had followed them into the cave to seek retreat from the sun, smelled the shrub of the sacred grave with increasing longing. The poor animal had not tasted green food for a long time, but having had a monastical education, it new how to respect the sacred. A dreadful struggle grew in its heart between hunger and reverence. Its eyes wetted, the nostrils expanded, it opened and closed its mouth, lightly licking those fragrant leaves with the end of its tongue, as a lover the hands of his sleeping friend, afraid that he might awaken her. But finally hunger prevailed over every other sentiment; and, bending its long ears according to its habit whenever prepared to perform a foolishness, it violently shook with its teeth that miraculous shrub which was consequently uprooted and hung

suspended from its profane mouth. The lovers, observing this snatching away of the altar, raised horrified eyes to the sacrilegious beast of burden, and they were still more terrified at the abundant blood which rushed from the root of the plant, while from the disclosed hole, sighs and moans were heard, and a mournful feminine voice uttered these words to the gluttonous, dumb animal; «From my heart, and not from a senseless body, this blood flows. Curse you, who writhed it; you shall bend under heavy loads and suffer beatings all the days of your life». Since that day the asses are subject, like the Jews, to a double malediction. Both are scattered all over the earth, abused, slapped and cursed; paying penalty, not only for the original, ancestral sin, but for the secondary sins of deicide and sacrilegious greediness. This ass who caused the second fall was less fortunate than Adam, for it was given no time to digest the forbidden fruit, but was immediately seized with strong spasms, and rendered its evil spirit directly. Since then, the blind, the lame, the possessed ones with evil spirits, and the paralytics of Provence, who were previously cured by the shrub of Magdalene, came every year to this place, where lay the unburied bones of the destroyer of their taumatourgical remedy, and there piled innumerable curses on its memory, and wished innumerable burdens on the backs of its descendants.

The two pilgrims, whose hairs stood up from fright, their teeth rattling like the castanets of a Spanish dancer, began to run from the mountain, and neither stopped until they perceived from a distance the azure waters of the Mediterranean. Then they rested a few hours by the shade of a pine, and marched again all night, in the morning departing for Toulon, their ears still tingling with Magdalene's

murderous curse upon the ass, and with the dying brayings of their miserable beast of burden.

The port of Toulon was deserted except for one Venetian galley. This was commissioned to transport the body and the autographed testament of St. Mark from Alexandria to Venice. From Venice it would travel to the shores of Provence to buy slaves, later exchanging these in the ports of the Orient for frankincense, cotton and sacred relics. That period was the golden age of slave trade. Venetians, Amalfians, Pisans and Genoese ran about the Mediterranean like sharks, competing in the purchase of humans from the captains of irregular troops and brigands, who after the death of Charles, ravaged France and Italy, pursuing their profession freely and undisturbed. But they, unlike those who followed the same profession a few years ago in Attica, instead of robbing their relatives as well by asking ransoms, at least lit fires by the shores of the sea, in order to inform the sailing buyers on the same day, to whom the captive had been sold, in this way benefiting the heirs instead of injuring them. The priests sometimes anathematized those pursuing such trade, but they also accepted gold from them, as well as embroidered vestments, precious spices, crosses set with stones and other products of their industry. But some evil tongues had said that many of the officers of the papal court, particularly that great *ceremonarian*, the grand marshal of the court, had bound secret relations with the chiefs of the brigands for the enrichment and embellishment of the Church.

The Venetian galley was ready to depart, and at the shore, a skiff awaited the return of the skipper who had gone for a meeting with his Jewish correspondent in order to fill up the cargo. After a

while, this honourable seafarer appeared. followed by eight sailors. He was holding a whip in the right hand, and in the left a rope, at the end of which were tightly fastened in pairs, like doves. the newly bought slaves, sixteen in number, nine human beings and seven women. (I said human beings and not men, since at that time, it was still considered doubtful that women belonged to the human race. Those denying them humanity, remarked on their *tragic* loves in Egypt and the curious *equestrians* in Thessaly, the opinions of Aristotle, the malice of women, the daughter of Aristoxenos who had an ass's feet, and the verse of Tobit). The returning skipper was a Ragusean fisherman, and a pagan in his youth, who, when initiated into the faith's mysteries, wished to imitate the Apostle, and became, like him, a *fisherman of human beings*, which could be angled and sold as the fishes had been previously. Observing the two lovers, who had tightened in their cassocks from hunger, as they sat dejectedly on the steps of the wharf, he thought that it would be good to take those two followers of Saint Benedict on the boat, in order to assist the hangman in maintaining order among the prisoners, for they could threaten the discontented with the flames of Hell. as he could proffer the gallows. This sailor, while having had much experience on the sea, was also a profound politician, and understood that only with priests and hangmen are human beings a docile herd, offering to these alone obedient backs for the shearing. The unfortunate youths, having tasted every bitterness, certainly as many as grew upon land, willingly accepted the offers of the slave dealer, hoping at last to find rest upon the waves, like Noah in the Ark, in which no evil was allowed to ender, with the exception of

tigers, snakes, scorpions and lice, (as many of the latter as were found in the Patriarch's beard). In the meantime the oars splitted the wave and shortly the sailors, slaves, skipper and passengers stepped on board the Saint Burchard, which was the name of this pious vessel.

The lovers seated themselves upon a heap of ropes by the forecastle and gazed upon the retreating shores of the verdant Provence. Jealousy had reanimated the love of Joanna, and her caprices had increased Frumentius' love for her. So, as they pressed together, they enjoyed the pleasures of reconciliation, and indulged in numberless plans for their future life. The boat was to sail for Alexandria but they intended to go to Athens, and there among the columns of Parthenon and the laurels of Ilyssos, to build their nest. The adopted father of Joanna, having descended as we have remarked, from the Greeks, had taught his wife's daughter the language and history of his ancestors. So the small feet of our heroine were eager to step on that ground which covered the ashes of Pericles and Aspasia.

Meanwhile the boat sailed along the rocky shores of St. Margaret. The day was warm, the sea unruffled, white cranes flew in the clear sky, and the sun glittered behind the milky clouds, as the face of a young Turkish woman shines beneath the foldings of her *giasmaki*(*). Nothing is sweeter, when the weather is such, than to find oneself upon the deck of *a swiftly passing ship*, waiting between the breakfast and the dinner hour, with the beloved supporting your head upon her knees, and with her, admiring the beauty of earth, sky and wa-

(*) GIASMAKI : Turkish word for veil on woman's face (Tr. Note).

ter. The stomach and heart ought to be satisfied, so that we will be at ease to admire nature. Otherwise the sun looks to us, or to me at least, a machine for ripening melons, the moon as a lantern for the thieves, the trees as combustive material, the sea as brinish liquid and life as unsubstantial as a pumpkin boiled in water.

After three days sailing, the boat laid its anchor at the port of Aleria, capital of Corsica, where the crew disembarked, so to fetch water. The monks disembarked with them in order to go and worship at the resting place of the venerable relics which are renowned all over the world. There verily was kept the stick of Moses; some lumps of the earth with which Adam was created; the rib of the Apostle Barnabas; a vial containing some drops of milk of the Theotokos, a piece of cloth woven by her own sacred hands, and some other no less sacred and genuine antiquities, which the pious traveler can still worship today. On the following day, the wind blew excessively, so our travelers passed near the island of Sardinia which, according to the poets, is famed for its cheeses, and the treachery of its inhabitants, and the third day falling of the. But I, though being a moderate swimmer, cannot hope to follow the tracks of my heroine's swift boat, as I would the step of her late ass. And besides, nautical descriptions of the waves, the ropes, the pitch and shipwrecks are so often detailed that they may cause nausea to the reader, as the movement of the boat affects the passenger, except when some pleasant episodes of famine or anthropophagy can be introduced stealthily. Hence, referring the mountaineers for their punishment to the milky descriptions of the poet P. Soutsos, in which not a poetical breath stirs the *silent beach, laughing, all milk*, we

will inform the rest of our readers of how our heroes yawned, vomited, tranquilized from the waves, and suffered all that happens to passengers. After two months sailing, they arrived happily at Corinth, and there departed through Megara to Athens under the guidance of some young Greek slave named Theonas, who had been presented to them by the skipper.

The sun rose behind Hymettos glittering and cloudless, like the sun that must have ripened the apples of Eden, when the three wayfarers, omitting a view of the Poecile (*), entered the city of Adrian. Crowds of Athenians were gathered in the churches, having come from every corner in order to celebrate the Sunday of Orthodoxy, the time of posting up of the sacred icons. Our travelers entered the Theseum, which was then a Christian church dedicated to Saint George. Christianity suffocated idolatry, yet the harmless victim made his murderer his general heir, bequeathing temples, ceremonies, sacrifices, augurs, priests and interpreters of dreams to the new faith. All these the Christians appropriated, and transformed pretty well for their own use, as readily as the plagiarist uses the ideas of others. Temples were called churches; the altars, sanctuaries; the poms, litanies; and the gods, saints. Saint Nicolaus was the new title used for Poseidon; Pan was for Saint Demetrios, and Apollon for Saint Elia. But the priests also fastened a long beard to these latter, so to make them more respectable, as the pimps of Rome gave a blonde wig to their boarders, so to attract more customers. But to return to Athens.

After the death of the infamous Theophilus, who

(*) POECILE: The great hall being decorated with fresco-paintings of Marathon by Polygnotos, now being devastated. (Tr. Note).

had cut off the hands of the painters and besmeared the sacred icons with lime, (much as the nurses covered their teats with aloe to make the infants feel sick) the unfortunate Easterners, having been deprived of their icons now for eleven years, felt their desire doubled after that long privation. From all parts of the mountains to which they had been proscribed by the oppressor, there descended the orthodox monks and painters. According to some sacred writers, not only the living flowed in crowds into the churches, but also many of the dead martyrs awakened from their graves, so to be present in that joyful ceremony at which the icons spoke and the coals in the censers leaped with joy. Nevertheless, the same untamed iconoclasts, changed suddenly to warm iconolaters, when the god-hated *Theophilus* succeeded the god-given *Theodora*(*). Parents glued the hair of their children upon the images of Panagia, monks offered their heads of hair for sacrifice, and the women scraped off the paint from the icons, and mixed it with water, and then drank the mixture. Even the priests often attempted with the same paints to adulterate the sacred wine of transubstantiation. And in Athens, that classical seat of idols, the fervor of the faithful became so intense that the bishop was compelled to cover the icons with glass in order to prevent the paint from being wiped off, for with so much kissing, they became as pale and invisible in a few days as the icon of the Saviour on the handkerchief of Veronica.

According to the lawyers, every catachresis creates some new law, and in the Church of Christ, every

(*) See Synaxaria and especially the «Kalokairinoe»; also Labeo (Sac. Collect. vol. 10, column 453 calls her «foemina veri dei munere, ut nomen indicat»). (Au. Note).

heresy eventually becomes an orthodox dogma. The frenzy of the Iconoclasts created the *Iconolatry*, and the son became *consubstantial with the Father*, in spite of the Arians, and the Panagia was named Theotokos for retracting the blasphemies of Nestorius. Pope Pius IX, in order to punish the impious doubts of his subjects about the immaculate conception of Theotokos, imposed on them as an article of faith, the immaculate pregnancy of her mother, the god's grandmother Anna. Who knows what good news will also spring from the blasphemous bible of Renan, which, according to reverend abbot Crelier, has *already much benefitted religion; given occasion to him and to his companions to prove the truth splendid as the light of the sun*,

The lovers, entering the Theseum with the servant guide, could hardly find a place, as each small corner of the crowded church seemed to be taken. On that morning, the liturgy was performed by the bishop of Athens, Nicetas, who shone like a newly coined florin under his gilded attire. The two children of the North marvelled at the sumptuousness of this servant of the God who taught that the faithful should choose poverty, assuring them that after death they would find Paradise paved with gold, sapphires, emeralds and amethysts. But the prelates of those days preferred the chicken's egg of to day rather than that of tomorrow, and left to those hermit successors of the cynics, the torn cassocks, the lice, and the emeralds of Paradise, though they continued to perform sacred functions within those very same temples where, according to Plutarch, no pagan could enter carrying gold. During the service, Theonas, who had been a lamp lighter, bent to Joanna's ear and explained to her the ceremonies of our liturgies, saying that the Easterners make the

sign of the Cross with the three fingers to signify the Holy Trinity, and bring them to the forehead in remembrance of the Deity that inhabits Heaven, and then to the belly to show that Jesus descended into Hades; to the right shoulder because the Son was seated at the right of the Father; and finally to the left shoulder in order to send away Satan from their heart. After this, Theonas explained the name and use of every part of the liturgist's holy panoply; of the belt, which *girds him in power*; of the kneepan, which is as a sword upon his thigh (*); of the cope, the triangles of which signify Jesus Christ; of the cornerstone of the Church, and of the spear, which the priest thrust obliquely into the blessed bread in remembrance of the soldier's sword that had been plunged into the side of the Saviour.

While Theonas explained these, the liturgist cut off a second blessed bread, which altered it to the *Body of Virgin Mary*, whose *real presence* in the mysteries was believed by the orthodox of that time, especially after that one occasion when the priest had cried out, «*Above all to the immaculated Pannagia*,» and the shewbread had been suddenly transformed into a visible virgin, holding the Son in her arms. The remaining blessed breads were sanctified for John the Baptist, the prophets, the martyrs and the other saints; and after these, the living were mentioned, such as the archbishop, the priests, the benefactors of the church and others. And when all received their appertaining share of the sacrifice, as in other times they had received in the same temple at the festival of Theseus, the deacon incensed the altar and the *asterisk*, and after these the «*de profundis*» was sung, and then..... But it is useless

I think to listen to the liturgy till the end, for it was as Byzantine then as it is today. And so, according to the Catholics, it will remain so in all the ages, in punishment for the schism, impregnable to civilization and attached to the models of the Middle Ages, like the oyster to the rock.

The two Germans were surprised at the length of that seemingly endless divine service, which was, however, an epitome of the epitomes of the collection of Saint Jacobus. But the descendants of Pericles also looked with astonishment at the two strangers, as the physiologist might observe some curious product of the animal realm, for they were not able to reconcile their monkish cassocks with the beardless faces and short hair. And as soon as the ceremony ended, and every one had taken the communion bread, a circle of many heads formed about the two children of the West, examining them from the tops of the heads to their feet, while everybody asked where they came from, why, as monks, they were not ashamed to have cut off their beards, and, above all, why they wore drawers, which was viewed by the Eastern monks as an unpardonable voluptuousness. Joanna and Theonas could hardly gasp answers to these various questions, for the tightening human chain soon became so close that it was difficult to breathe. At this point, Frumentius, who neither knew Greek nor had much patience, was tempted to open a passage with his fists, when by good fate, the bishop arrived in time to set them free, and to scold the flock for its importunity. After taking the two strangers upon his pontifical palanquin that was borne by eight newly converted Bulgarians, the latter serving as horses for His Holiness, he removed the youths to the bishopric which was situated at the foot of the Acropolis. Here a banquet of great sumpt-

uousness was being prepared for the festival of instantiating the icons.

The table was spread in the garden under the shade of an old plane tree, and it bent under a load of jugs and meats, whose aromas mingled with the odour of the flowers. Soon after the guests began to arrive. Most of these were orthodox monks who had sought refuge in the caves and the mountains during the Iconomachy, in order not to be forced by Theophilus to spit upon the holy icons, or to marry a nun in the middle of the market place. These good hermits had become savages, and their appearance was somewhat wild after their long cohabitation with the wild beasts. Among them was Father Matthew, from whose mouth worms came forth after his excessive fasting. And there was Athanassius, who never washed his face or his feet, and never ate a cooked meal because the temporary fires of the kitchen reminded him of the inextinguishable fires of Hell. And then there was Meletius, whose body was covered with bad ulcers, like Job. Yet Job scratched his body with a shell for relief, but the holy Meletius, whenever a worm from his ulcers fell to the ground, put it again in its place, in order to have the most pains of the flesh, and there after the rewards of the soul.

After these came Father Pafnutius, who was over dipping in the heavenly ecstasies and little cared for the worldly, so that when thirsty, he often drank the oil of his own *lamp* rather than water; holy Tryphon, who never wore a clean shirt, but always the unwashed ones of his abbot; hermit Nikon, who had submitted to the sin of the flesh and later shut himself in the graveyard for his repentance, where he remained thirty years, sleeping erect, like the horses, and eating only the herbs which grew from

the soil, watering them with his tears. After these came other mountaineer monks, who supported their tardy and shaking steps with long sticks. Some of these were like mutilated old statues, and all, without exception, were filthy, lousy and unbearable with the odors of fasting, holiness and garlic exhaling.

The distressed Joanna receded with horror in the presence of those loathesome products of the Eastern fanaticism, sometimes holding her nose, other times closing her eyes, doubting that these were human beings. She unwillingly recollected as much as she had read of the ancients about the cynocephalos and pithecantropos, and recalled the words in the Synaxaria about the Satyrs, who lived together with Saint Anthony in the deserts of Thebais while they conversed with him about theology. Yet these fetid and worm eaten skeletons to whom pleasure and debauchery, Hell and cleanliness, were words having about the same meaning; these monks, I say, the anchorites, hermits and ascetics, whose memory today arouses such pity or terror, had a great reputation during the reign of the pious Theodora, as great indeed, as the coachmen held during the time of Michael III, and the monkeys during Pope Julius' era. So, the aspiring and clever Bishop Nicetas was compelled to give them reception, as our political candidates give their hands to the offscourings of the market place, and to the rogues of the mountains. Besides the monks, there were invited to the table of the bishop, two instructors of Greek letters, one astrologer and three eunuchs of the Byzantine court, who brought to Athens the imperial decree for the posting up of the icons.

When all these took their places and uttered the phrase, «The poor eats,» Nicetas cut off a piece of bread and offered it on a silver plate to the icon of Panagia, who always received the first share at the

banquets of the pious Christians, as the daughter of Rhea (*) was so honored by the ancients. After this, the bishop attended to his guests, plunging the knife in the belly of a fat young goat, which opened diffusing delightful smells of garlic, onions and leeks, with which the animal had been stuffed with marvelous artistry. After the young goat, fishes seasoned with caviar were served, and later, a sheep, garnished with honey and quinces. Joanna, being accustomed to the simple and unseasoned meals of the Germany of that time, where the banquets began and ended, as in the Iliad, with roasted meats, plunged her fork with hesitation and mistrust into these complicated products of the Byzantine art of cooking. And when she tasted the mixture of pitch, gypsum and resin wine of Attica, she turned away her lips, fearful lest these Athenians had given her hemlock to drink, as they, had to Socrates. The monk who was her neighbour at the table, offered her a different cup, but this caused greater distress to our German female. It was filled with some monkish drink called *acorn*(**), which had its origin in that drink of St. Anthony, made from the essence of hogs' acorns,—a hideous drink still preserved in the schools of Greece and served to the poor boarders instead of coffee. Joanna and Frumentius, seated amidst that display of foods, yet were fasting and thirsting, much as the Frank ambassadors, at the banquets of Nicephorus. The hospitable Nicetas, pitying them, ordered roasted turtle doves, honey of

(*) Hestia. (Au. Note).

(**) Of this acorn mention is made also by Athenaeos, but it is unknown if it was that same liquid which was also in use in the East during the Middle Ages. See Athen. 1. 62, and Zambelios' Byzantine studies, note 325. (Au. Note).

Hymettos, and some pure wine of Chios for them.

At the sight of the red jug containing the divine beverage, the good hermits were as overjoyed as Hades when the Saviour descended to him. Everybody reached for the cup that held the purple nectar of Homer's native place, thus proving that human nature, while it may submit, like the pregnant woman with her capricious desires, simulating a fondness for the acorn, filthiness, hogs and resin, yet when the true and pure shine out, regardless of its form, humans will turn straight to it, as the magnet to the pole. So did the guests of Nicetas turn to the jug of Chios. I begin to believe there exists but one true taste, thus disproving that proverb. «*de gustibus non disputandum*». All of Adam's descendants are made from the same dough, both the eyes, the ears and the lips as well; «*one bread and one body being the multitude*»(*).

So all must find pleasing the virgins of Circassia, the diamonds of the Indies, the horses of the Arabs, the columns of the Parthenon, the grapes of Constantinople, the feet of the Spanish girls, ice in the Summertime, Italian songs and the wines of France. Even the blacks of Africa prefer the white women to their Ethiopian consorts. If in some one of our churches, there appeared a Madonna of Correggio, or there is sounded suddenly some sacred melody of Rossini or Mozart, the most truly orthodox eyes and ears would turn to them. And those preferring the black Byzantine paintings and nasal soundings, would justify the title of Schismatics.

Nicetas, after giving the drink to his guests, began to recite the verse of the proverbs, «*Drink the wine which I give you*». (**).

(*) Corinthians I, 10, 17. Au. Note).

(**) Proverbs 9, 5 (Au. Note).

And the monks, holding up their cups, sang that verse of Isaiah, «*Come on, let us take the wine and drink to drunkenness*»(*). But before drinking, they piously shut their eyes in accord with the specified decree of Solomon, which prohibits the winebibbers to observe the wine before drinking it(**), much as Mohamet decreed that the Turks should not look upon their wives before they married them. If a man becomes intoxicated, it is a certain sign that he is not a drunkard; just as truly, if he desires many women, it is a proof of a long sobriety. But the heads of those good ascetics, which, for so many years, knew only supplications, and the moral intoxication induced by heavenly ecstasies, began shortly to revolve, like the earth about the sun. Yet even when drunk, these holy hermits spoke only of sacred things. And as old warriors enjoy narrating their battles and lists of trophies after dinner, so these monks began to extoll their miracles and their labours. One recounted that, having been befriended by a poor man, and not having any other thing to offer him but some lentils, he planted a grain of wheat in the beard of his host. This flourished to such a great degree that when that good man shook his beard, it yielded fifty sacks of wheat. Another told that once, by the altar of his abbot, he planted a pastoral stick in the garden of the monastery, and watered it every day with dew and with tears. After three years it sprouted, and gave so many and various kinds of fruit; apples, peaches, cherries, figs and grapes, that he was able to feed all his brothers. Then the holy Nikon related that his heart had been

(*) Isaiah 16, 12. (Au. Note).

(**) Non intuearis vinum quantum flavescit. (Proverbs 1, 4). Au. Note).

disturbed by a desire to see the glorious beauty of Panagia, so he fasted and prayed day and night to rid himself of this obsession. Yet the usually merciful Pantanassa (*) was pitiless with him, and appeared before him in all her beauty and brightness. Her radiant charm so dazzled him that he was left one eye. He would have become completely blind had he not remembered to shut the other eye in time.

After these recountals, the holy Pangratius took the floor; he whose stick had made the stones sprout lilies. Then followed the Athenian hermit Aegidius, whose shadow cured as many sick as it overshadowed, so that whenever he visited the streets of the cities the sufferers competed for a place in its shade, as the ancients sought the shadow of the ass. The good ascetics related these, and other miraculous events, as they drank the wine of Chios to the health of the Orthodox and their dearest female ruler Theodora. Do not think, reader, that these were visions of excited monks or even legendary tales. On the contrary, these authentic miracles are also recognized by the Church, which every Orthodox one, at least according to the canon of the most venerable ecumenical Synod of Nice, should *«accent in faith with all his heart, and if tempted, he will find it impossible to detract from or misinterpret them; anathema, be it so !»*

While the ascetics talked about miracles, Nicetas conversed with the two Benedictines and the Byzantine eunuchs about dogmatism. At first he asked Joanna what dogma the learned of the West had

(*) PANTANASSA : Another title for Virgin Mary given by the Orthodox church, meaning the Female Ruler of the Universe. (Tr. Note).

concerning the *Eucharist* (*). He wished to know if they believed that the bread and the wine were indeed changed to the body and blood of the Saviour, or whether they contemplated this as a symbol and image of the divine body. This question occupied the minds of those days as today the Question of the Near East (**). Joanna, not knowing the opinion of her host, answered most diplomatically that while the sun is in the sky, its brightness and heat are also upon the earth; thus the body of the Christ is also found in the bread and in the wine of the Communion. But this metaphorical answer did not please Niketas, who, as a disciple of the *effectual presence*, explained to Joanna that the bread and the wine are the dead body of the Saviour, and our stomach its grave, in which it is interred by the priest; and it rises shortly from it, as Christ rose after the crucifixion. After this, Nicetas asked Joanna if the Christians of the West also honored Panagia with the title of Theotokos, but Joanna answered that *hootokos*(***) designated the chickens, and *zootokos*(****) the cats, as it was feared that the relation of the ancient words might scandalize Theotokos in the sight of the faithful. It was not advisable to give occasion to the pagans to compare the *God's mother* with Rhea, as in Egypt the followers of Hypatia. Later, wishing to perplex the bishop, she

(*) The word transubstantiation was not yet in use. (Au Note).

(**) QUESTION OF THE NEAR EAST: The author refers to that eternal question up to a few years ago about the Near East; the ambitions of the spoilers of Greece to take Asia Minor from the Turks. (Tr. Note)

(***) HOOTOKOS: Bearing eggs. (Tr. Note).

(****) ZOOTOKOS: Bearing children. (Tr. Note).

asked him why the Easterners did not cut off their hair, thus following the counsel of the Apostle Paul ; who remarked that it was womanish and dishonorable for a man to grow long hair (*). Nicetas, not knowing how to contradict this, scratched his long-haired head (**) and returned again to the discussion of the dogmas ; such as the *recompense*, the double nature of Jesus after the incarnation, whether the *logos* were joined with the body of the Saviour in the womb of Parthenos, or were there after her parturition, and other such theological knots, which were solved by those of Ephesus with the sword, as Alexander the Great the gordian knot ; or with kicks, as the asses settle their amorous and herbivorous quarrels (***).

Meanwhile, night came on and the servant deacons hastened to fetch a torch, so to enlighten their bishop that he would not become such a hishop as those fathers during Copronymus' time who abolished the icons. But tha guests, exhausted after their perplexing debate, gave up arguments to return to their cups. And Joanna, dizzied from the wine and cries of the monks about her, who by now had begun to teach the dishes how to dance, and the cups how to fly, rose quietly and departed from the dishopric, followed by the faithful Frumentius.

(*) For a man with long hair it is dishonour, and for the woman, glory. (Paul). (Au. Note).

(**) Probably is the proper answer, bat I was unable to find it, and the priests whon I asked about this did not know any more than Nicetas. (Au. Note).

(***) According to Evagrius (book 2, chapter 2) the patriarch of Constantinople Flavianus, overthrown at the second Synod in Ephesos, kicked after the manner of Dioscuros, patriarch of Alexandria, who according to the testimony of Zonaras (book 13, qage 44), was accustomed to kick like a mule. (Au. Note).

As we have remarked, the garden was laid at the foot of the Acropolis, so after a short ascension, the lovers found themselves upon the top of that famed marble stone. (Some disciples of modern humor would say that this stone had been purposely placed there as a footstool for the monuments of Pericles). They arrived at that hour in which the ghosts, the tympanitics, the lamias, and other inhabitants of the darkness left their wormy graves or the gates of Hades, (for the last is no longer guarded by the three-headed Cerberos), and these creatures would wander into the fields, disturbing the dreams of the sheep and the kisses of the lovers. But our monks carried with them a tooth of St. Sabina and so evaded with it all evil encounters. Only from a distance could they see a herd of the ass-headed battues who were shaking their long ears and gazing amorously at the moon, in whose light they sought the coming Messiah. Twice or thrice our heroes stumbled against sleeping monks, but not in the least disturb them, for the Greeks had by this time become accustomed to being trodden like grapes under the feet of foreigners.

Joanna had not seen any other temples except for a few druidic monoliths and a few deformed Roman ruins. The churches of her native place were wooden and unhewn (*), resembling a little the Germans who had built them. So she gazed with wonder and astonishment at the columns of the Parthenon and the Caryatides of Erechtheum; while the good Frumentius kissed the feet of the latter and asked if they were petrified angels. The temple of Parthenos Athena was then called the Shrine of the Par-

(*) WOODEN AND UMHEWN : It is a common Greek phrase of today, designating one as ignorant. (Tr. Note)

thenos Maria. But on this occasion, neither nasal psalmodies nor tedious bells came to disturb the fresh delight of our young heroes. Only a few owls nesting in the cavities of the roof emitted a mournful clamour at intervals, as if they lamented their mistress' banishment. The disk of Hecate, encircled by transparent clouds, like a modest virgin beneath her nightly veils, shone firm at a great height down upon those immortal marbles, a flash white and obscure, quite like that light which shone on the sleeping Adonis when the goddess visited him upon the top of the mountains of Latmos. The columns of the Olympeum, the stream of Ilissos, the sky-coloured waves of the Phaleron, the olive groves, the oleanders, the tops of the hills ornamented with churches or graves; all these held the vision of the two youths with a girdle that was even more charming than that cestus of Aphrodite. And their enjoyment was greatly enhanced by their own love as they stood before that panorama; and its beauty was rendered twice as great because they, being drunk, saw everything double. Joanna had seated herself upon a marble bench, and Frumentius, lying down by the feet of his friend, pointed out the temple of Apteris Nike and prayed that their love might remain as wingless as she. After talking thus, and frequently interrupting the conversations with kisses, much as authors use commas and periods, they fell asleep at last upon a glittering bed of pantelic marble.

The following morning, shaking off sleep from their eyes, and the morning dew from their cassocks, they descended the hill to visit Athens. The heart of Joanna throbbed with curiosity and fear as she realized that she would soon stand before the many idols of the city, which St. Gregory had considered

dangerous to the Christian souls, as dangerous as the sight of a late charming and cheerful sweetheart to a man who has married an ugly and frowning woman. But the hopes and fears of our heroine were poorly founded. Sometime before, those godly Byzantine emperors had demolished the works of Myron, Alkamenes and Polykletos, even though these had pleased St. Luke and were esteemed by Alaric. This outrageous destruction was begun during the time of Constantine and continued through the period of Theodosius the Little. Those indefatigable idolaters demonstrated their Christian fervor not only against the stones, but also against those poor unfortunates whom they suspected of preserving their fathers' religion. The slaughter of a sheep for the family feast, the carrying of flowers to his father's grave, the gathering of camomiles in the light of the moon, the aromatizing of his house or the wearing about his neck of a phylactery against fever; any of these, when reported by the hooded spies, constituted the damning of a man as sorcerer or pagan, and he was chained and sent to Scythopolis, where the Christian butchery had been established. Here the pious judges assembled and argued whether they would roast the pagans upon the gridiron, boil them in seething oil, or cut them to pieces. Numberless martyrologists narrate the struggles of the Christian confessors by their wounds, from which dropped milk and which could be refreshed by the flames. But no one as yet has written the infallible tale of those martyrs, who, instead of mythical milk, shed real blood; instead of being refreshed, were corroded by the fires of Christian injustice; the latter being more caustic, as it appears, than the flames of the polytheistical cruelty.

The two Benedictines, followed by Theonas and a

multitude of Athenians, who, during the days of the Apostle *had nothing to do but listen to strange tales*, went all over the city. Deprived of its idols and altars, Athens resembled the blind Polyphemos of Odysseus. Where there recently had been a statue, a wooden cross was now thrust in its place, and instead of an altar, there was an ugly small church covered by a dome that resembled a stony periwig. These chapels were built by the Athenian Eudocia, who, wishing to consecrate a private residence to every Saint, were compelled to build numberless huts, thus honouring more the industry of the beavers than the dignity of the unknown god. And on the porches of these huts, monks and anchorites were seated, scratching their ulcers, or else old manuscripts, from which they removed the old legends, and weaving baskets and breakfasting on onions. Perhaps they also thanked God for being born Hellenes and not barbarians. Only the classic beauty of the women was left for the two strangers to admire. In that century Athens was the harem of the Byzantine emperors, for they took their wives from there, much as their successors the Sultans, sought them in Circassia. This improvement of the Attic race began at the time of Iconomachy, for when the Byzantine images were banished, the women, instead of having the gaunt Panagias and the slender saints continually before their eyes, could lift them instead to the bas-reliefs of the Parthenon and so brought forth their children to resemble these new visions. From this point of view, for the good of the children, it seems to me that it is necessary for us to reform our ecclesiastical iconography. Good proof of such influence can be found among the wives of the Jewish bankers of Prussia, who from morning till night, are counting dollars and florins bearing the

bust of King William, and so bring forth children very much like the monarch-justly was he called father of his subjects (*).

Besides the beauty of the women, the two children of the North also admired the unusual modesty of the virgins, who were wrapped in long veils and pressed as close at their mothers side as a sword to the soldier's thigh. And these virgins, instead of distributing their glances as freely as the bread of communion to the passers-by, fixed their eyes on the ground, in order to evade the ditches and deviations, blushing whenever the wind shook the foldings of their dress, and in every respect differing from the little girls of today who look so much like married women that one wonders a little on this account, just why their fathers seek husbands for them.

Frumentius and Joanna continued on, and went beyond the Tower of the Winds, and to the market place. Here they were astonished to see both noblemen and bishops purchasing their daily provisions of leeks. At last the youths arrived at the central stoa, where, instead of philosophers, they found astrologers, bowl-diviners, dream interpreters, and schoolmasters, who came down from the schools on Hymettos once a week to attract students with the sweetness of their words and their jugs of honey. Teaching no longer sufficed for the needs of these schoolmasters, so they thought it well to add to it by gathering some profits from the sweet produce of their apiaries.

For ten days Joanna and her companion wandered amidst the antiquities, the churches and the environs of Athens. And for another ten they rested under the hospitable roof of the monastery of Dafnion.

(*) See Heinrich Heine's «Reischbilder», vol. 2. (Au Note).

The monks here were ready to offer shelter for life to the two Benedictines, whose descendants were about to expel them shortly thereafter from their fold (*) like rapacious wolves. But the boiled diet, the long prayers, the straw beds, and the filthiness of the good fathers could not attract these children of the West for very long, for in the more lax monasteries of Germany they had grown accustomed to good food and bathing. So they relinquished the glory of being monks of *the first order* and *angelic* followers of St. Basil; or even *monks of the short order*, as some of the canons that were placed among the *originals* (**) they would have found rather burdensome. Within a little distance from the monastery there was a hermitage that had been deserted since the death of the holy monk, Hermylus, a priest who had made the effort to refuse all food with the exception of Holy Communion, and died after ten days of such a diet. Here the lovers set up their fireplace and spent their small fortune in a purchase of a thick mattress, a long spit, a brazen seething pot, a pitcher of olive oil, two she-goats, ten chickens, and a big dog to guard all the rest. They also accepted the necessary apparatus for the salvation of their souls, the skull of the dead man and his good example, as gratuitous inheritance.

During the first days in their new abode, the two Benedictines had an uninterrupted festival. Lent

(*) The monastery of Dafnion was taken indeed by the Benedictines during the time of the Dukes Laroehus, whose graves still can be seen at the entrance of the church. See Rangabes «Hellenica» vol. I. page 221. (Au. Note).

(**) Regarding the various schisms, see the explanations of Leo Allatius, «De consensu Ecclesiae», book I. chapter 8; also the «Confessional» of Nicodemus, page 162. (Au. Note).

passed by, and Jesus rose from the dead, while from every place there resounded kisses, and lambs were turned around upon the fires. Even nature, as if willing to celebrate the resurrection of the Saviour, shook off her winterish dress, like a young widow the mourning of her husband. The laurels of Apollon blushed, the grass sprang from the ruins, and Spring taught the asses to dance around their female companions. Joanna, rising at daybreak, would breathe the morning vapors, as she milked the she-goats (that rule had not yet been made which forbade the monks to milk, holding that it inspired evil desires). After milking, Joanna would gather the cherries that had dropped with the dew, boil some eggs, and then would awaken Frumentius. After breakfast he would go to catch fishes or to set up traps for hares, while Theonas cultivated the garden. Then Joanna, withdrawing into the depths of the cell, would copy the lives of the saints, later selling these to increase the domestic income. At other times, she read the dreams of Plato or the sighs of Theocritos, the monks having loaned or donated to her these manuscripts with the same disinterestedness that made the fox of the fable give barley to the horse. In the evening, supper was served at the door of the hermitage under an old pine tree, which the villagers called Patriarch because of its height and age. The products of the garden, of fishing and of hunting, made a unique table for these two monks in the mountain, who, as Saxons and as Benedictines, were naturally omniverous. Joanna, reading the Greek philosophers both day and night, and sometimes the records of those apostolic or even heretic fathers who lived before the discoveries of fastings, dogmas, and motets, had gradually scraped off the monkish rust. And,

being sagacious and thoughtful, she adopted an indulgent religion for her own use, resembling those of her fellow countrymen of today, who, because of the progression of learning and the great number of theological schools in Berlin and Tubingen, have succeeded in making some kind of Christianity without Christ; thus rivaling the dignified cooks who now can prepare garlic sauce without garlic, and P. Soutsos, who writes poems without poetry. Frumentius, ready as the heroes of the romantic school to partake of Paradise or Hell with his beloved, partook of chickens on Friday and of lambs on Wednesday with her. In Rome, whenever a dictator was chosen, every other authority ceased; thus also, when love is made absolute master, all other sentiments of the heart are extinguished, as are the stars in the sky as soon as the full moon rises. Zeus, forgetting his divinity, adorned himself with feathers or horns in order to please his sweethearts. Aristotle, bearing a pack saddle and bridle in his mouth, offered his seventy-year old back to Cleophile, to whom he served as an ass in the Indies. And Frumentius not only ate meat on Friday, but would also have taken a beating for the sake of Joanna.

The smell of that impious kitchen scandalized the pious nostrils of the Greek monks not a little. Many of these, passing by the hermitage, made the sign of the Cross and held their noses, as Odysseus barred the ears of his companions to guard them from the songs of the sirens. Other more courageous ones entered the hermitage in order to terrify the carnivorous monks with threats of the flames of Hell, or the aphorisms of the church. But Joanna received them kindly, and with so much grace offered them the thicker portions, that these followers

of St. Basil, *monks of the first order*, who did not eat birds or anything that flew, except perhaps a few flies that fell by chance into their soup, departed many a time with chicken in their bellies, and with a sin on their conscience.

In the meantime, rumors of the intelligence, the beauty and the knowledge of the young *Brother John* having spread, the whole mountenside now began to drift to the city. Many of the learned teachers of Hymettos, leaving their bees and students, proceeded to visit our heroine to discuss the thorny problems of dogmatism, or to talk of devils and bowl-divinations with her. Even the bishop Nicetas came often to repose under the shade of the giant pine tree, and, like Petrarch, was puzzled that the fruit of knowledge could so rapidly ripen under the blonde tresses of that twenty-year old head. And not only the priests and the learned, but the noblemen and sojourner patricians of the new Rome, gradually learned the road to the hermitage. None passed by Dafnion without knocking at the door of the Benedictines, and many of them, as they gazed at the round arms or kissed the white fingers of Father John, were seized by some inexplicable agitation, as if the devil of pleasure had bitten their hearts. Joanna, considering her male dress a safe breastplate against every evil desire, and not yet knowing the morals of these neo-Platonists, was insatiable for the incense of this abulation; and every day she yoked to her chariot a new worshipper of infinite wisdom and of soft red lips. Many a time, when surrounded by such a swarm, she sighed as she thought how many more admirers, and how more fervent they would be, if, instead of hiding her charms under the cassock, like a golden blade within a leaden case, she were suddenly to exhibit her real figure clothed

in silken dress, her golden hair falling loose upon her shoulders. Frumentius in the beginning, rejoiced for the success of his friend. But after a little, he began to notice some changes in the conduct of Joanna, which alarmed him as much as the coquetish lady is disturbed by her first wrinkles. The young monk concealed beneath his robust and manly form a heart softer than wax, born to love, as the nightingale is made to sing and the ass to kick. Indeed, though he was able to devour two hundred chestnuts without feeling the least load on his stomach, he could not digest a cold or even indifferent look from his companion; and this after seven years of uninterrupted conjugal love! According to moralists, pleasure is the grave of love, but I would rather compare it to the blowing of that aesopian satyr, which sometimes caused warmth, and at other times, cold. However, the kissings and caressings of our heroine had become as necessary to the good Frumentius as his daily bread; and as much as these diminished, his longing increased, just as his appetite would be increased if a portion was cut off from his daily food.

Months and years passed, while Joanna became more indifferent as long as the circle of her admirers widened, and the sadness of the wretched youth increased daily, and a pale cloud spread upon his youthful and cheerful countenance, like a black veil over a blooming rose-bed. For a long time he attempted to conceal his despondency, but finally he shed tears from his eyes and complaints from his lips. Joanna sought in the beginning to quiet her companion by assuring him that the encircling dark clouds were simply black butterfly offsprings of his furious encephalos. But Frumentius could not be persuaded, and women soon tire of such monotonous

melancholy. Even those Oceanides, though they were goddesses, remained but for one day to console the bound Prometheus. Then they grew tired of his complaints and abandoned him upon the rock, where the vulture devoured his entrails. With as little pity, our heroine, after granting a little consolation or a swift kiss to her companion, offering these as one throws a coin into the cap of a beggar, she would then turn her back to him,— at night, in order to sleep, and in the day, in order to associate with her books or her courtiers, whose visits followed one after another, from morning till night. Frumentius would usually sit in some corner of the cabin digesting his choler, like the heroes of Homer, and when he felt himself unable to restrain the tears or his fists, would rush out of the cabin and go pluck a chicken for dinner, or a daisy, in order to learn if Joanna loved him.

But such a state of affairs was too impossible to last forever. The young monk sometimes thought he would cut off Joanna's head, and at other times he thought to sever every relation with her. The coquetry and the flirtations of our heroine *every day took on more serious aspects*, according to the phrase of our journalists. One abbot, two bishops and the eparch of Attica already knew the contents of her cassock, many others suspected, and the remainder offered Brother John the incense of Platonic worship. Frumentius did not cease to complain and abuse his beloved, and she, losing her patience at length, gave him answers as dry as the figs of Calamae. The relation of the two youths gradually came to resemble those cacti which surround our royal garden, their fruit lasting but one day and their thorns forever. Yet whenever Frumentius thought seriously of separating from his friend, he felt his hair rise upright in dismay.

Neither with her nor without her could he live ; and the miserable youth, not knowing that the heart of woman is a movable sand, upon which only one night's tent can be pitched, built there a home where he had intended to remain all his life. Driven away with insults and kicks, from that Eden, instead of submitting to the punishment like Adam, he again sought by every means to enter that forbidden enclosure, whose door was shut to him by Joanna, as coldly and maliciously as the sword is wielded in the hands of the angel of Paradise. Sometimes, lying down by the feet of his friend, he tried to affect her by recalling their many kisses and vows, but his words fell upon her cruelty like the rain upon the leaves. At other times, despairing, he sought with all his strength to eradicate love from his heart, as the gardener attempts to weed out a fetid onion which has grown among his heliotropes. But the bad plant had deep roots, and so after vain struggle, he would resign himself and, falling upon the ground, bathed in perspiration, he cursed *the day on which he was born, and the hour in which they said, «Behold, a male !»*

And do not think, reader, that the good Frumentius had become an excessively creature, like the *Soutsios* (*), hero or some other such biped of the romantic menagerie. On the contrary, he was a prudent, godly child of Germany, such as that classic country of beer and sauerkraut bore before she was corrupted by the groans of Werthe, and the blasphemies of Strauss and Hegel ; and probably he loved Joanna as Aristippos loved Lais, and cats love milk. But he knew no other woman, and it was not possible to

(*) SOUTSIOS HERO : Referring to P. Soutsos' poems.
(Tr. Note)

find one in Athens, for the descendants of Solon were not yet as civilized as they are today, and the mothers, husbands, brothers, and other such annoying creatures, surrounded the women, as the thorns surround the roses. And these guardians had not yet shared the honor of holding the candle of enjoyment with strangers, even when they were admirals or diplomats. The Byzantine emperors, alone, in those days, could extend their hands to the Athenian females, and even then only the right hand. All this made difficult the position of the unhappy Frumentius, and pardonable his follies, for his flourishing and vigorous youth a woman was as necessary as the dew for the meadows. The poets picture for us, in mythical lands and times, strange and monstrous products of the vegetable or animal kingdom: mellifluous lotuses, singing trees, winged dragons, goat-footed satyrs, hydras, giants, sirens, heroes, magi, prophets, martyrs, saints and other curiosities which none of us have ever seen except in a painting or a dream. The *moral kingdom* (if you will pardon this expression), also has its mythology; of heroic devotions, godly ecstasies, superhuman sacrifices, inseparable friendships and other such tragical or romantic material. Among these chimerical products of the past ages it is proper, I think, to place love as well, for the knights of the Middle Ages and Plato's misinterpreters knew it; though according to sound philosophy it is nothing more than *the touch of two epidermises* (*).

And if Frumentius was ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of Joanna as he lay at her feet cursing the day he was born, it was for the same

(*) This term belongs to Samfortius. (Au. Note)

reason that Adam forgave his faithless woman, because . . . he had no other.

Yet our heroine, although surrounded by devotees, was not quite reposing on a bed of roses. The mournings and lamentations of Frumentius, even if they no longer affected her, nevertheless troubled her nerves, and often they cut off her sleep and her appetite. Even more serious, however, was the fact that these sorrowings disclosed their secret to everyone. According to Athenaeos, love and a cough are the only things which cannot be hidden. But I, (if it is allowed me to have a contrary opinion to the tipsy ones who talk on philosophy during supper) think on the contrary: that nothing is more easily concealed than love, whenever it is happy. Only jealousy, anxiety, desperation and such amorous seasonings are impressed on the face; impressed quite as definitely as the executioner's strokes; but the other; joy and happiness are granted to us with so much niggardliness by the daughters of Eve, that seldom are they bequeathed to such a degree that we cannot hide them. Every woman without exception, resembles those decadent but spirited Romans, who demanded that the poor victims who were being slaughtered in the amphitheatres, fall down and gratefully stretch their necks for the sword. Joanna, by means of jealous thrusts, coldness, caprices, and other feminine inventions, tortured the poor Frumentius, but she would become angry if a cry of pain escaped his lips as she inflicted these various cruelties, or if, in his despondency, he showed his fists or the door to some one of his rivals.

In the meantime, the scandalous happenings at the hermitage had stirred all the inhabitants of Dafnion. The sex and follies of Joanna were no longer secrets to any of them, and they began to

consider her a monster sent by the Franks to devour the Orthodox Church. While it was true that many women before her—Saint Matrona, Pelagia and Marcone, wore cassocks and cohabitated with monks, they were very careful not to eat chickens on Friday, or sin with bishops. Among those who were most outraged against Joanna were *some angelic monks of the first order*, fetid and filthy, like all those who are concerned with pleasing God alone. These monks, having wished, at some unguarded moment, to please Joanna as well, were sent away with the advice to cut off their hair, or to take a bath; and in their wrath, they sought to take revenge against the disdainful nun by throwing anathemas, onions, stones and curses at her whenever she came out of the cell. There were some few monks who attempted to speak well of the beautiful German female, but their voices were drowned in the general outcry.

Thus, from within there was Frumentius, and from without, public opinion, both waging war on Joanna, and as she observed the fever of her faithful cooling every day through fear of the anathemas, while the audacity of her enemies increased, she began to think seriously of departing from that place. She had been in Athens now for eight years, knew all its monuments, manuscripts and its inhabitants, so that the city had begun to seem as insipid to her as the kisses of Frumentius. And further, she burned with a desire to show forth her knowledge, her beauty and her spirit upon a wider stage. She was approaching her thirtieth year, when women, not having enough of their own peculiar defects, begin to take on ours, adding ambition, pedantry, drunkenness, and the other *male* vices to their feminine perfection, much as in Greece today,

politicians attempt to make her a model kingdom of the Near-East. Joanna was not like those shepherdesses of Ovid who were satisfied if Athos alone listened to their song. On the contrary, she often shed tears upon the pages of her books as she thought how her wisdom might remain unknown and unsung in that corner of Attica ; much as the young nuns mourn when, disrobing at night, they remember that their lily-white beauty may be seen only by the immaterial and invisible bridegroom.

This was her state of mind when, one evening, after bidding farewell to her friend Nicetas on his return to Constantinople, she strayed near the hollow shore of Piraeus, and saw a foreign boat entering the harbor. Its white sails looked to her like the wings of an angel coming to rescue her from that land of exile. The boat was an Italian one, belonging to the Bishop of Geneva, Guglielmo the Least, and it was journeying to the East to purchase frankincense for the Highest, and dresses for his servants. Joanna, questioning the sailors in Latin as they landed, was informed that they would depart the following morning for Rome. They were willing to take her there, allowing her to take the place of the lost priest who had sailed with them. The latter had been snatched by the waves as he stood, at the prow, attempting, as is the custom of the Catholics, to calm the hurricane by throwing sacred portions into the sea, thus offering communion to the dolphins. Agreeing to the plan of departure, Joanna returned to Frumentius, who had waited for her in a cave near the Bay of Mounechia. The weather was damp, the wind bitter, and the sea groaned lugubriously beneath the cave as she entered it. Frumentius had spread dinner and a bed and when Joanna arrived, he hastened to light a fire, seating her near it that

she might dry her clothes which were wet from the spray of the waves. Although her heart had long since expired with pedantry and coquetry, she was filled with some kind of uneasiness as she realized how soon she would be separated from this companion forever; from whom, in the space of fifteen years, she had not been parted for a moment. For a little, she thought to take him along on her wanderings; but the peculiar jealousy of the poor monk, which nourished itself on the rusty idea that women must have but one lover, as the asses but one pack saddle and the peoples one king, made him a tedious apparatus, and difficult to transport. Yet Joanna dared not bid him farewell, afraid lest in that deserted place he take to weeping or the use of his fists. Therefore, she decided it would be more compassionate, as well as more discreet, to let him fall asleep on her bosom before she left him; thereby following the example of the executioners of Judea, who offered the condemned some inebriating drink before they crucified him. So taking the head of Frumentius on her knees, she began to caress his hair with her fingers and his forehead with her lips; and that forgiving youth who had been so much abused, deceived and trodden upon, instantly forgot all past abuses and tortures, and even her treacheries. Just the touch of her fingers healed all his wounds, as readily as the constitution of the French kings cured the ulcers of their subjects by a simple placing on of hands. Frumentius, possessed by an indescribable joy, did not know which Saint to thank for this sudden change, as in his desperation he had invoked them all. At last, after his long months of sleepless nights, he fell asleep at last upon that gentlest of pillows, after promising motets and candles to each and every Saint.

When on the following morning, still before daybreak, he opened his arms to embrace the beloved, he found nought but the straws of his mattress to hold. Jumping up in terror, he stretched out his arms and felt in the darkness, like the blinded Polyphemos seeking for Odysseus. The dawn still struggled with the darkness, when, bare-headed, bare-footed and desperate, the unfortunate youth came forth from the cave. But nowhere did he find a trace of Joanna. After going around the hill several times in vain, he went down to the shore; running like a wild boar from rock's top to rock's top, and crying «Joanna!» in a loud voice. The concave rocks repeated the clamour and, for each cry of Frumentius calling the runaway, they echoed her name after him, as if they pitied the miserable youth. The sun rose shortly to help him in his ardent searches, but he found the shore deserted. Yet out upon the sea, he could discern a flyboat and by its poop, stood Joanna, clothed in her cassock. The runaway perhaps saw Frumentius on the rocky shore as he stretched out his arms to her and when he finally threw himself into the sea to swim to her. But she turned away her face, and incited the rowers to hasten on their way. The flyboat soon drew up by the side of the larger vessel, which opened all its sails to the winds, and Frumentius, his hopes and his strength exhausted, returned, a breathless shipwreck, and lay upon the shore. When he came to himself again, he rejected life as bad dream. But the hours passed, the sun dried his clothes, and the dream did not end.

For a moment he thought to drown it in the sea, as Solomon had hoped to drown his sorrows in wine, but the water was shallow and besides, he was afraid of Hell, where he would have to wait a

long time for Joanna. Then he raised his unhappy eyes to the sky, but none of the saintesses descended to offer him her lips for consolation, as Bacchos came to Ariadne. Besides, Frumentius was not a woman, and who knows whether, in his grief, he would not have pushed back even Saint Thais, or the blonde Magdalene?

When darkness came on, he returned again to cave. But he passed a wretched night upon that bed, on which the beauties of Joanna were still impressed. For fifteen days he remained there, questioning: *«And what light is given to those who suffer bitterness, and what life to those souls in torture?»*(*) At last, his patron, Saint Boniface, pitied him and came down from Heaven to ease his suffering. One evening as Frumentius, exhausted after his lamentation, slept on the sands of the shore, there descended from the heavens that apostle of the Saxons, who opened the breasts of the sleeper with a knife, and entered his sacred fingers in the aperture and extracted the heart. He plunged this in a pit full of water, which he had previously sanctified. That burning heart shuddered in the water, like an anchovy in the frying pan, and when cooled, the saint fixed it again to its spot. After closing the wound, the good Boniface returned again to his heavenly abode.

Did it ever happen to you, my reader, to fall asleep with an insufferable cough, perspiring as you slept, and then awakening, find yourself cured? Not knowing that you are well, you open your mouth unconsciously, prepared to fulfill the usual tribute to the accursed cough. But how happy you feel when you find the troublesome brute is no longer lodged

(*) Job, 13, 20. (Au. Note).

in your throat. Frumentius, as he opened his eyes, was prepared to offer the usual libation of tears to the ungrateful Joanna. But for all his anticipation, his eyes remained dry, and this good Benedictine found his appetite for breakfast, after his many days of fasting, was somewhat greater than his desire to weep. Shortly after, a young shepherdess passed him, carrying a jar of milk upon her head and a chaplet of collyriums in her right hand. Calling her, he tasted her fully ; and when that amaryllis took the copper coin, and kissing the hand of the monk, went away, joining her song with the voice of the larks while the wind of the morning played with the folds of her dress ; Frumentius, observing her, sensed for the first time that there were other women in the world besides Joanna. His cure may well be considered radical. By the miracle of the Saint he was rescued from his silly passion, thereby becoming useless to us as hero of this novel, though from that moment he was a much more useful member of society. If living today, he could, after this cure, consider himself well adapted to practice whatever profession he wished : that of letter-carrier, spy, member of parliament, fortune or office hunter ; or he could keep the books of a Chian merchant, or hold the feet of a condemned man as he hung from the gallows. But at that time, the *Kyrie eleisons* were the better art, and Frumentius did well to remain a monk. And now I will let Joanna rest for awhile before following her to Rome.

The great poets, such as Homer and the poet P. Soutsos, write beautiful verses while asleep ; but I always wipe my pen before I place the nightcap on my head. Only the superior men may be allowed sleepy expressions, but we humble writers must always be well *awake*, like the geese of Capitoline which awoke the Romans.

PART FOUR

Φεῦ τῆς θηλείας πῇ προβήσεται, φρενός ;
Τι τέρμα τόλμης καὶ θράσους γενήσεται ;
(EYPH. Ἰππόλ. 935)

The cradle of all the great men is encircled by a doubling darkness, in which only the poets and novelists dare to move ; kindling their magic lamp of imagination, by which light they see but pale or faintly smiling phantoms. But when the hero reaches manhood, when the blossom changes to fruit, there supervenes a swarm of historians holding the burning and luminous torch of criticism. At the appearance of these frowning torch-bearers, the golden-winged creatures of the imagination flee in terror, for, like the stars and the forty-year-old women, they are happy only in the dim light. And if the critical illumination happens to be too lively, even the hero often disappears in the light of the critic, as Homer disappeared in the light of Buffier and Jesus in the eyes of Strauss. Joanna has remained firm in her high position, not at all terrified ; but from now on, she constitutes an historical heroine, and the imaginary crowns which adored the golden hair of the seventeen year old girl, now are unsuitable to the head whose future is shortly to be decorated with the triple crown of Saint Peter. The material of my story, while taken before from my imagination, I now draw from the venerable chronologists ! and if

you find this part of the book more unsavory, I thank you, reader, for the preference.

Rome, having lost the conquest of the world by the sword, was busy setting up her cosmocracy again, sending dogmas instead of legions into her former provinces, and weaving in silence that vast web in which she would soon have all the nations entangled. When our heroine arrived in Rome, Saint Leo IV, successor to Sergius the Pigmouth, was the spider in that intricate web. Nearly all the prelates of that time, whether they liked it or not, took the title of Saint; but this Leo had truly acquired his title by the sweat of his brow, having discovered the bodies of the Saint martyrs, Sempronianus, Nicostratus and Castorius, and having aroused with his pastoral staff, like Poseidon with his trident, a strong storm at sea which dissipated the ships of the Saracens, and also by killing the great dragon that nestled in the church of Saint Lucia with a prayer. Many a time he had driven off the attacks of the infidels and, in a manner most pleasing to God, he established within the papal palace, a women's monastery. where, under his papal protection, the chosen virgins of Rome were sanctified. But this Pontifex lover of the Muses was a patron of letters as well as of nuns, and he was so much attracted by the wise Joanna, that after a whole hour of conversing with her about every thing of the known, and of some other things, he immediately appointed her instructor of theology in the school of Saint Martino, where the holy Augustine had taught formerly.

Joanna, or rather *Father* John, (because her female name seems now cacophonous) spent her first days going about the Eternal City. But by that time, not much remained of the ancient splendour of the monuments of Rome. The teacher of Lord Elgin,

Charles the Great, had ransacked the ancient temples, in accord with the Frankish custom, so that he could decorate the metropolis of Aquisgranum with the pillaged columns and bas-reliefs. The Christian churches that were built by the predecessors of Leo, were unrythmic and monstrously shaped mixtures of Roman and Oriental art, much like the Christianity of the West at that time, which was an inconsistent, and indigestible, amalgamation of Hebraism and idolatry. During this period there were none who bothered very much about dogmas, and the ancient gods, at least those who had not been transformed into Christian Saints, were banished from Olympos and had emigrated to Hades, where they lived in peace with the Devil of the Christians and the Satan of the Hebrews. They were recognized by the Theologians as connivers with the sorcerers; and it was believed they sometimes even emigrated in the bodies of those Christians who were then called daimoniacs. On the day of Joanna's arrival, some strange ceremonial feast was being celebrated in the churches of Rome in honor of the ancient gods. Choruses of drunken Christians danced and sang profane songs, while they cried out, «*Evoe ! evoe !*» The dancers chased one another with whips, as in the festival of Kronion, while priestesses of Aphrodite, their only dresses being phylacteries around their necks, and little bells on their feet, ran about amongst the crowd, offering wine and kisses to the dancers for a few centimes. All this to the great scandal of the newly converted foreigners in Rome, who thought these expressions were included in the Christian liturgy, just as those present at some turbulent sessions of the American parliament suppose that the kickings also constitute a part of democratic liberties.

Such were the human beings whom Father John was charged to teach with the salt of Attica. In the first days he experimented by speaking to them about Dogmatism, but his auditors viewed these discussions about the physiology of Saint Trinity, which so much occupied the Greeks, as unnecessary as the long beards which decorated their jawbones. The successors of the divine Plato in the East were still discussing the nature of God, but the descendants of Cato and Cincinnatus, being more practical, were following theology as a serious profession, from which the priests expected their daily bread. And as well as their daily bread, they expected ministries, bishoprics, horses, concubines, and other good things which are only obtained by efficiency and practical knowledge. So instead of investigating the mysteries of the Christian Heaven, they were busy, as thoughtful human beings, in extending their kingdom all over the earth and exacting tributes in its name.

And Joanna, being an ingenious and discerning woman, quickly guessed the desires of her students. Shaking off the Byzantine ideologies, she hastened to descend from Heaven to earth, from the snowy summits of metaphysics to the fattish and fertile plains of the canonical law. And on the following day, she would speak eloquently of the worldly power of the Pope, of the donations of Charles, of tributcs, tenthlies, golden robes and other priestly sweetmeats with which the cassock-wearers endeavored to make our expectation of Paradise a little less impatient. In the same way did the suitors of Penelope amuse themselves with the housemaids while awaiting the pleasure of the mistress. She succeeded finally in drawing the affection of her auditors by her clever words, as Orpheus was able to move the stones with his lyre. And this comparison

is not hyperbolical, for if they were not stones, other nations were in the habit of calling the Italians asses, and their synods, *ass-councils*. The few teachers there were in Rome at that time were sent from Ireland, Scotia and Galatia to the poor descendants of Cicero, just as we receive ours today from the ranks of the scholars of Germany.

But Claudius, Don Gallus, Bigintimillus and other foreign wise men were either dead now or getting old, and in the midst of the darkness of the Middle Ages, Italy surpassed the nations surrounding her in ignorance, as Calypso her nymphs in stature. Most of the priests did not know how to read, and instead of teaching the Gospel from the pulpit, they told the faithful tales of how Panagia supported the feet of hanging rogues with her white hands, whenever they had lit candles before her icons; and how, in order to save a devout nun from sin, she took her form and her bed and so received the lovers; and how these last, while denying God, still remained faithful to Panagia and so were secretly entered by her into the blessed mansions, and how the merciful Theotokos gave them philtres and magic drinks that they might enjoy their sweethearts.

In that great darkness, the wisdom of our heroine glittered like a toll on a foggy night. A multitude of auditors, and often even the Pope Leo, crowded the monastery of Saint Martino in order to hear this new Augustine, who, instead of touching upon the dreadful mysteries of religion, spoke only of pleasant and useful things, praising the virtues of the Pontifex and disparaging the Byzantines, explaining the theorems of Aristotle, or relating the misery of his descendants, speaking of the garlicks, the ulcers and the fastings. The tradition of John resembled those hospitable houses of Hamburg, where is found food

suitable for every taste, perfumes to every sense of smell, and women speaking all languages and satisfying all desires. Many a time our heroine began with the *judgment of God* and finished with the art of cooking. But at that time the products of the human encephalon were not yet arranged to order for trained talents, as are the reptiles in the museum bottles. Theology was the only profession, and it, like Briareos, had a hundred hands with which it drew all interests to its generous bosom. And the blonde head of our heroine held a very comprehensive knowledge of all these illegitimate children of theology.

Joanna taught continuously for two years, and owed all her reputation to her eloquence, because none in Rome suspected what treasures were hidden under her cassock. Every man's face was smooth shaven in this city and among the monks the nose alone popped out from the cowl. Gradually, intoxicated by her success, she began to believe that she had been changed to man, as Tiresias had been changed to woman. Frumentius had been forgotten long ago and the ambitious cassock-wearer was not in a hurry to choose his successor, since she had her mind upon higher things; such as abbot's mantles, mules for the termination, bishops' mitres, and even the golden slippers of the Pope were now a part of the dreams of our blonde heroine; and, as a careful woman, she placed lovers at the depth of the stage, much as the deserts are kept for the end of a banquet. But she did not surrender herself to vain dreams, but labored day and night for her rise, praising the powerful, teaching, writing, and composing verses for Christ and the Pope, rhythmically rhyming verses which she was the first to introduce into Italy.

She also practiced the science of medicine, and according to evil tongues, she was well acquainted with witchcraft, and could force the evil spirits (that is, the former gods such as Bacchos, Hera, Pan and Aphrodite) to leave the gates of darkness and run like faithful servants to obey her entreaties.

In the meantime, the praiseworthy Pope Leo had grown old and suffered from rheumatism. Having wanted to walk like Saint Peter upon the sea, he had taken an involuntary bath, and after losing his mitre and part of his reputation, he appointed *Father John as his secret secretary*.

There were in the court of the Pope at that time, beside the dignitary himself,—all secret men or spies—not only officers, but spying servants, secret cooks and vile Ethiopian menials. There were also secret stairs and doors and secret rooms in the Vatican; and often the representative of Jesus upon earth feasted at secret banquets, though I do not know if he had the apostles as companions. Our heroine, upon first entering the private rooms of his Holiness, found it difficult to place her foot definitely upon the thick and downy Oriental carpets, over which one would wish to slide, like those horses of Ericthonios, who, when they ran, scarcely touched the tips of the flowers. And when Joanna came before the Chief of Christendom seated upon an ivory and gold throne and surrounded by silver baskets, gold porringers, (*) emerald ornamented censers and other treasures; she was so dazzled by the brilliant display that she was forced to shut her eyes for the moment. She knelt piously to kiss the sandals of Leo, but he raised *Father John* with a paternal affection.

(*) See the explanation of these words by Muratori (Antiquit. Ital. med. aevi Dissert. VI). (Au. Note).

They worked together until evening and Leo was greatly satisfied with her and from that day forth loved his new secret secretary as he might have loved his own child.

The cubicularis, divenderis, ostiarius, scriptoris, arcanus (*) and other courtiers who encircled Leo, boasting that they offered services to his Holiness that rivaled the services the slaves rendered to the emperors of Rome, murmured at the beginning against the young favourite, as critical of her as the royal guards of the venerable Catherine were of any young candidate who knocked at the door of her bedroom. But the manners of *Father John* were so very courteous and sweet, and so great was his disinterestedness, that in a short time he conquered all hearts, and everyone went to him whenever they had anything to ask from the holy father. And Joanna, as a foreigner in Rome, had no ambitious nephews or concubines to satisfy, so she promptly submitted the petitions of her friends to the Pope. The number and gratitude of these friends increased daily, and in a short time the secret secretary became a real politician, surrounded by a swarm of insatiable office hunters, who gathered about him as the chickens around the farmerette when, at sunset, she shakes the kernels of corn from her apron.

Though she was concerned for all her friends, Joanna had nothing to ask for herself, or rather, she had but one desire. Daily she implored the merciful Pantanassa to reward the virtues of the sainted Pope Leo very quickly by transporting him to a better life. An ungrateful and impious prayer to address to Theotokos! But in Rome the faithful are on such

(*) Baronius, from whom this description was taken, uses the word (gabatham) Ann. Eccl. vol. i, p. 83. (Au. Note)

familiar terms with Panagia that they ask not only for wealth, horses, positions and honors, but also plead the death of an enemy, a wealthy relative, a rival in love or any other such annoying creature, and request yet other things which, if one had asked even a pimp for them, he would have blushed. Assassins leave the knife upon her altar, before sinking it in a victim's bowels, prostitutes hang their belts before her icons, and the drunkards empty bottles and jugs to her health. So Joanna, naturally following the customs of the land, addressed her ambitious desires to Panagia. But as she did not despise the devil's protection, she frequently sought refuge as well in the sinister witchcraft ceremonies of the Middle Ages. Withdrawing into the ruins of an ancient temple, she would call upon the spirits of Hell as she plunged a sharp needle into the waxen image of Leo, and raise smoke upon the tripods from poisonous herbs, and the moon, who at that time listened to the invocations of the sorcerers, stood still with as much promptitude as the sun had for Joshua.

I do not know whether it was Panagia or the Devil that listened to the prayers of our heroine, and probably she knew not which of the two to thank, but in any event, Leo was taken ill very shortly, and his illness grew graver every day. After the doctors had exhausted all their herbs, and the monks all their appeals to the Archangel Michael, the successor to Asclepios; and after the Jewish sorcerers and the Arabian astrologers had vainly practiced their occult arts, it was resolved then by the general council of bishops to have the Chief of Christendom removed to the subterranean church of Saint Tiburtius, in order to wait there for the dream in which the Saint would manifest which was the suitable drug they should

use to effect his cure. At that time the faithful when embarrassed for more resources, sought refuge in Heaven-sent dreams. Thus the church, although, she burned sorcerers, accepted the dream divination resembling those doctors of today who persecute the hypnotists although they use a species of hypnotism in their own practice.

The unfortunate Pope was removed from his bed to a black hearse, and transferred by four robust monks to a subterranean church. Here he was displayed before the altar, surrounded by burning candles, desperate doctors, and psalming priests. The famous Pontifex, although a Saint, was more than pious, for he had spent his life beautifying Rome, heaping up treasures, building more fortresses than churches, and defending his states against the Saracens rather than against the Devil. He never burned a heretic, but cut many enemies in pieces, and was, in every respect, more than worthy of the title of great king, as well as that of Saint, as even Voltaire has admitted. And if he was sometimes forced to work miracles, he did this as a favor to his idiot subjects, just as Jesus felt it necessary to perform miracles for the Hebrews of little faith. But illness will transform even the *lions* to hares, and the most intelligent human to a pious Christian. The greatest poet of this century, Byron, whose brain weighed 638 drams, has confessed openly that when falling ill after the first phlebotomy, he believed in the miracles of Moses; after the second, in the incarnation; after the third, in the immaculate conception, and after the fourth, he grieved because there were no other similar beliefs he could accept. And the good Leo, probably a wiser man in his century, awaited his cure from Saint Tiburtius. For three whole days the Pontifex remained hungry and motionless,

awaiting the coming of a divine dream. But his pains never forsook him long enough to allow him to enjoy sleep, or to have dreams, so that after three days of agony, he finally shut his eyes in the eternal sleep which is without dreams.

After the usual ceremonies were performed, and the body of the most praiseworthy Leo was washed in wine and oil, he was laid to the worms for a feast. After the bells were silenced and the eyes dried, the prelates, the lower clergy, the ambassadors of the emperor, the notables and all the people assembled in the square of Saint Peter, in order to consider the selection of the future Pope.

In the ninth century, it was not the custom to select the Pontifex in the secret darkness of the Sacerdotal Council; there was no conclave in which the cardinals were shut up tightly in dark cells, everyone voting for himself until forced by hunger agree to the general demands (*). The Popes then were selected in a crowded marketplace, with the sun in mid-heaven, the wine and even blood flowing abundantly, while the factions fought with the aid of sticks and stones rather than with intrigues. The Pontifexes at that time were representatives of the people as were the tribunes of ancient Rome, and the selection of the Pope was entrusted for the most part to the people. And their votes were bought openly for promises of gold, wine or women who ran about the market place loosely exchanging kisses for ballots. So the death of a Pope brought a real

(*) According to the canon of the Synod of Lugdunum the cardinals were shut in dark cells during the time of the election. On the first day, they were offered two meals, and on the second and remaining days, only dry bread. (Au. Note).

joy to the subjects, who, as the constitutional peoples of today, had but one possession, their vote; and in every election even the porters are granted the honor of shaking hands with the gilded ruler, of drinking sparkling wine from his golden cup, and are offered caresses from his sweet-smelling concubines. According to Saint Prudentius, there are days in Hades when the eternal fires are extinguished and the tortures of the sinners cease. The days of elections are like this for the people on earth, for only then is it recalled that the slave and the master, the common clay pot and the purple jug, are brotherly vessels, made from the same mud and by the same potter kneaded.

While all of Rome stirred from the square, our heroine, having prepared everything long before for the success of her plan, was standing upon a high terrace of the monastery of Saint Martino, crossing her hands upon her breast, in the manner of Napoleon, and with restless eyes she observed the vicissitudes of the electoral struggle. There were many in that year contending for the tiara, but the four hundred students of Joanna and the same number of monks, the courtiers who had received favors from her, and the women who admired the beauty and the eloquence of the young Benedictine, and the old attendants of Leo, all these favoured *Father John*. They praised the disinterestedness and the virtues of their candidate, saying that as he had neither nephews nor a harem, he would be likely to distribute the revenues of Saint Peter among the poor. The struggle lasted for four whole hours, during which time the face of Joanna grew pale and flushed by turns, but finally, overcome with emotion, she fell upon a marble seat and closed her eyes, awaiting her fate. Suddenly the cheerful cries of

her friends, hailing the Pope, JOHANNES VIII, roused her from that passionate lethargy.

The new Pontifex, trembling with joy, drew the purple robe over his shoulders and put on the cross-bearing sandals, but the latter, whether it was because they hated the feminine feet, or just because they were too big, thrice forsok her feet as she descended the stairway of the monastery. A multitude of enthusiastic people and a gold ornamented mule waited by the door for the newly proclaimed Pope. Joanna mounted and departed immediately for Lateran, where she was seated upon the golden throne, and the triple crown of Rome, the World, and Heaven, was placed on her head, while the secretary composed the decree of the election and the shouts of the multitude resounded. At that moment, in order to make the triumph of our heroine more brilliant, the King of England, Ethelwulf, entered Rome on a pilgrimage, and he asked to be the first to kiss the feet of the new Pope, by this kiss making his states tributary of the Holy See. And some ambassadors of Constantinople were presented, and they had brought precious gifts and some spoils from Syracuse as mementos from the Emperor Michael. Joanna saw the dream of her youth fulfilled at last (*), standing upon a high throne with the vapors of incense condensing clouds about her. Possessed by an unspeakable joy, she turned radiant glances upon that kneeling multitude, and then raising her eyes to the sky, she exclaimed, «Lioba, Lioba, I thank you!»

The master of ceremonies interrupted that ecstasy of the newly proclaimed Pope by inviting him to sit upon a low chair called the *copronical*, upon which

(*) See page 34, (Au. Note).

the Pontifex was placed after his proclamation, in order to remind him that even though he bore a triple crown, he was nevertheless subject, like the least of his subjects, to nature's viler obligations. And while His Holiness was seated, the priests sang the «Kyrios from kopros», while they burned straws and hemp to remind the Pope that just as the blaze is extinguished, so does all glory pass in this world.

The ceremonies lasted for eight full days. But while the aged priests rubbed their lips on the sandals of our heroine, all of nature rose against such pollution. On the day following the coronation, although it was still the middle of Summer, all the roads of Rome covered with a sheet of snow, as if the holy city wished to proclaim her mourning by donning as funereal shroud the dress of Winter. But there also followed many wonders and omens in France and Germany; earthquakes shook the whole empire, while in Bresse there fell a rain of blood, and in Normandy, a hail of dead locusts. And even the owls and night crows who nested in the ceiling of the Vatican cried out in a sinister manner for three nights like the geese of Capitoline, when the Gauls threatened Rome. I have recorded all these signals from authentic chronologists, setting them down as justifications of Saint Peter, whom the heretics wrongfully accused of not defending his desecrated throne with miracles. And beside the crows, plagues, blood and earthquakes, the Apostle could not use any other signals against Joanna, since, according to Sirach, «*there is no good sign upon the woman*».(*)

When, after experiencing so many sensations, Joanna was finally left alone in the vast papal bed

(*) Super mulierum bonum non est signum(Eccles. XLVI, 6.) Au. Note).

chamber, amidst so much quiet, magnificence and heavy scents, she sought sleep in vain upon that purple bed which resembled an altar erected to Morpheus. Grief, joy and coffee have the same effect upon the eyelids. The Great Alexander, who slept so deeply on the day preceding some battle which I cannot recall, probably did not sleep as well on the day that followed the victory. But why should we seek sleep and dreams, when the truth or the *reality* as we say today, is sweeter than every dream? Who remembers without desire and emotion the sleepless night he passed after enjoying many returns from the lottery, or receiving a laurel for a poem, or after the first kiss from his sweetheart? Joanna, shaking off the gold embroidered coverings of her apostolic bed, ran barefooted about her new abode. In every corner crystal, gold, blue stone and porphyry reflected the light of the candle. The papal room resembled the Paradise of Saint John, who as a genuine Hebrew, roused the greediness of his compatriots by describing the residence of the blessed as paved in gold and diamonds. This rich description contributed not a little to the spreading of the Christian faith, for everyone preferred the rich Hebrew Paradise to the poor Elysium, where instead of sapphires and pearls, there was little else beside the myrtle groves, transparent streams and the ivory gate.

Joanna, going about the chamber, found her joy insatiable, even in the sight of so many treasures, and she weighed the jeweled goblets in her white hands, counted the diamonds and emeralds on the statue of Panagia, and examined the ornaments and wheels of the Arabian clock. Later, approaching the small table by the bed upon which was laid a light dinner ready for His Holiness if, perchance, he

awakened at night, she drank a cup of that sweetest nectar of Vesuvio, called the *tear of Christ* (*) so baptized by the pious Italians, and for which any true winebibber would have exchanged a drop of his blood for every drop of this divine liquid. The vapors of the wine foining with the vapors of ambition, increased the intoxication of our heroine to the utmost. If at that moment the grand marshal of the palace had appeared to her, summoning her to sit upon the copronical chair, or the servant of Phillip had cried, «*remember, you are a human*», she would have replied to them both that they were beasts. Finding that vast chamber too narrow for one of her dignity, she opened the window, and as she gazed upon the sleeping Rome, she sought in vain to recall in history who could be compared with her. Many women before her had wielded the sword, or worn a crown upon their heads. Yet one can hardly compare the easily withered martial laurels of a temporary kingdom on earth, with that papal authority which made one ruler of souls and bodies by divine right, and overseer of the World, Paradise and Hades. And who would dare to compare Semiramis, Morgana, the Aurelian Parthenos or any other heroine to our Joanna? Yet we have no other comparative term at hand, though whenever a human being surpasses his fellows through some advantage, we usually compare him with some beast; to a bull, if he existed as a great king; to an ass, if he was a brave warrior; (**) to a fox, if he was distinguished as a diplomat; but to what species of beast can we compare

(*) *Le crima Christi*. (Au. Note)

(**) The homeric verses are known according to which Agamemnon is compared to a bull and Ajax to an ass. (Au. Note).

one who has succeeded in becoming a Pope ?

The cold of the early morning, and the brayings of the asses as they brought the daily portions of herbs to her subjects, interrupted the ambitious musings of Joanna, and closing the window, she returned to bed. The following day, she was awakened at ten, according to papal custom, and after washing her hands, she hastened to resume the royal vestments. A few days were sufficient for her to learn the art of popery. Before the end of one week, as she sat upon the apostolic throne, any one could have plainly read upon her brow the words : *«there are no other gods to you but me»*. No Pontifex before her had extended his feet with such Christian humbleness for kisses ; but Joanna was long ago accustomed to this as a woman. And wonderful also was the ability with which she knew how to combine worldly authority with the spiritual, gathering tributes through the exactor in the name of Jesus, and lives by means of the executioner, and besides these, confiscating, imprisoning and performing whatever other duty related to the art of government. And do not think, reader, that I allege these as accusations against her, but simply as trying necessities of her position, to which Joanna submitted with Christian patience.

Women, those incarnated mixtures of love, devotedness, mercifulness and all the other tender virtues, can, whenever necessity calls, plunge in blood as in a fragrant bath. The Vestals, those nuns of ancient Rome, often turned their thumbs down to indicate that a defeated duel fighter was to be killed ; Saint Eirene put to death tens of thousands of human beings and even blinded her son ; and the venerable queens, Elizabeth of England and Catherine of Russia, used the axe and the *knutu*

with the same lightness as they used their fans. But the Popes, in divine right rather than by divine order, followed the same customs. Saint Peter, one day when hungry, fell in ecstasy and saw a linen sheet upon which all the quadrupeds, reptiles and biped animals, were spread, and at the same time heard a voice saying to him: «*Rise, Peter, immolate and eat*». (*) This was the first revelation of their worldly authority that the Popes received, and since that time, they immolate and eat, in order to imitate that Apostle in every respect. For the rich had placed the price of their sold properties (**) at the feet of Peter, who rendered all the people poor by making the pretence of giving everything to the poor. (***) And if in the Middle Ages, they sometimes killed their fellow creatures, they did so because at that time, faith in the immortal life was sufficiently great to dispel any remorse of conscience for the burning of human beings. And these Popes were also certain that the Apostles would have also practiced the destruction of humans, if they had had executioners and sufficient wood.

Joanna, according to the testimony of all the historians, was, in the beginning at least, a good Pope and defended all the traditions of her predecessors, never tiring of weaving that dogmatical net which so skillfully concealed Heaven from the sight of the pious Christians. But none during that period bothered to investigate the papal texture to see if it was truly the heavenly dome. The old Romans demanded bread and circuses from their emperors, and their descendants asked the same from the

(*) Acts of Apostles, 10, 19, and following. (Au. Note).

(**) Acts of Apostles. 4, 81. (Au. Note).

(***) Zosimos, book 5, chapter 13. (Au. Note).

Popes. The later circuses in Rome were chiefly concerned with religion, of course, and our heroine, or rather, His Holiness John VIII, being young, elegant and ostentatious, took every means possible to make these religious plays magnificent. Day and night the smoke of incense rose to Heaven, candles burned, the bells resounded and the shouts of the multitude could be heard. Only the Roman women sometimes complained that the Pontifex did not quite fulfill the promise of his youth and beauty, and they hoped that he would soon learn and mend his error, thus imitating his predecessors by delivering to them the keys of his heart and the treasury.

The ambitious intoxication and incomparable efficiency of our heroine lasted for almost two years, in which space she ordained fourteen bishops, erected five churches, added a new doctrine to the *Creed*,(*) wrote three books against the iconoclasts, sheared the emperor Lothaire, crowned his successor Louis, and performed many other memorable deeds, which the chronologists have recorded with admiration. Those historians who have not wished to admit that Joanna was a Pope, attribute some of these acts to her predecessor and some to her successor, or else erase them from the records of papal history. In this same manner, the Bourbonists dated the reign of Louis XVIII from the day of the death of his brother, omitting as worthy of little significance, the laurels and rule of Napoleon. Should the descendants of Saint Louis predominate until the end, if they succeed in hurling down all the statues of the Corsican, and from all books blot out his name, as the

(*) At that time, the addition of Spaniards about the procession of the Holy Ghost was common in Rome. (Au. Note).

Catholics undertook to erase the name of Joanna, who knows whether, *as the years pass*, even that giant will seem to be a legendary figure, just as we consider as mythical personages those giants who preceded him, and who had heaped up mountains upon mountains in order to besiege Heaven. And after one or two thousand years when France, like Greece, may be reduced to a land of memories, perhaps some curious archeologist will come searching for records of Bonaparte, as we today search for records of Joanna. And he will probably inform his readers that in the dark years of history, there had lived a courageous man called Napoleon, by some, and Prometheus, by others, who had undertaken to snatch the authority of kings who to punish him, had nailed him on a rock in the desert at the ends of the world, where an insatiable vulture called Hudson (*) devoured his entrails. But let us return to Joanna.

The high positions of society resemble the mountains in that, while they are harmonious in form and cheerful to the sight from a distance, at times clothed in a virginal dress of clouds or wearing a complexion of gold to honor the merchants or purple for the ambitious. But as soon as one ascends to the summit, there one is surrounded by thistles, thorns and beasts, and in Attica, even by brigands too (**). And so the throne of Saint Peter began to appear to our heroine when, day and night, she was besieged by flattering secretaries, court slaves and other such voracious beggars who encircled the throne as crows surround the carrion. She soon tired of

(*) Hudson Lowe, the jailor of Napoleon at St. Helena. (Au. Note).

(**) The above were written in 1866. (Au. Note).

stretching her feet to their low kisses, and remembered with longing those golden days when, instead of her sandals, she had extended her lips for the hot kisses of Frumentius. Joanna began now to be disgusted with the smell of incense, as the cooks grow to detest the odor of quails. Often she yawned as she dressed in her gold embroidered robes to perform sacred functions before the altar of Saint Peter, or when, from the height of the Vatican, she blessed Rome and the whole world.

But while the vapors of ambition were being dissipated, the old desires awoke again. While consternation mollifies the souls of women, idleness and good table will have the same effect on their passions as oil upon the fire. Knowing this, the ancient Egyptians thriftily counted their Kings' bread, meat, the mattresses of their beds, and subordinated all else to the hours of their sleep, in order to remain suitable to reign. But the successors of Peter lived otherwise, reposed on swans' feathers and ate pyramids of partridges and hecatombs of deer; changing this diet on the days of fast to the winged fishes-- that is to geese and ducks. And they substituted pickled eggs, bulbs, oysters, mushrooms and other good things for those apples of Eden, which, according to the rabbis, contain cantharides instead of cores. All these had made our heroine a model of those constitutional kings who, like the gods of Epicuros, snored upon their high thrones while they surrendered the backs of their subjects to the shears of their ministers, much as the Creator, according to the Manicheans, surrendered the world to the discretion of the Devil.

In the meantime, Roman affairs moved very badly; the treasures piled up by Leo had been changed to horses, litanies, banquets and pensions.

The keepers of the keys of the papal treasury, although they had long ago emptied it, did not hasten to withdraw, thereby imitating Diogenes who, after drinking the wine, shut himself up in the barrel. And our most holy Johannes VIII, tired of the affairs of state, subjects, bulls, aphorisms and other papal sports, withdrew to Ostia, which was the Corfu of the Popes of that time, and there in the center of a company of cheerful, beardless priests, passed thoughtless days lulled by the azure waves of the Mediterranean, and by the melody of the flutes, violins and cellos, three chorde violins (*) and the eunuchs who followed His Holiness everywhere. Joanna was in the midway of life, as Dante was when he encountered the lion, leopard and the wolf in the forest; but she felt other beasts approaching her, no less fearful to women than wolves and lions; that is, the approach of white hair and wrinkles. Her beauty had sung its cygneous song. But although she had eaten so many forbidden fruits, she still preserved all her teeth, white and vigorous, and her desire, which, in the midst of her ambition, had been forgotten, began again to agitate her breasts, which, like her teeth, were solid and well preserved. Often, when her comely courtiers were gathered at a magnificent banquet, she would look over the ranks of these cassock-wearing Adonises, in the manner that the venerable Catherine had observed her royal guards, hesitating as to which of them she should give the apple and wondering how she could offer it gracefully. On other occasions, remembering fully the seriousness of such a daring deed, she retreated with fear, like a constitutional king

(*) The violins at that time had only three chords (Au. Note).

before an arbitrary act that is a fruit forbidden by the constitutional Endymions. Joanna cared little about the question of impiety and was still less afraid of the verdict of the Heavenly tribunal, which punishes weakness with eternal fire, boiling in the same seething pot those who had caused suffering with those who had caused pleasure. Having had much experience, and being a bright woman, Joanna could not believe that God placed so many good things before us so that we might resist them, as the grapes are laid before the guests at the English banquets though they are not supposed to be eaten. But she was afraid of scandal, pregnancy and evil tongues, those three vigilant sentinels of feminine chastity. If men were sterile, like mules and dumb like the fishes, and never sighed groans but in breathing, the descendants of Eve would readily desert those sentinels, I think. Joanna struggled against the devil for two whole months, and spread the leaves of the willow tree upon her bed-like the Athenians at the festivals of Demeter who drank nymphaean decoctions, according to Pliny-and ate the heads of lettuce; thereby following the prescription of Saint John the Fasting, and omitted none of the drugs of the Middle Ages in her attempt to stifle and suffocate youthful desires which grew again in her forty-year old breasts, like flowers upon the ruins. But such desires resemble the lime, which, the more it is soaked, the more it burns. Joanna, after every victory against the flesh, instead of singing triumphal songs, wept for her lost opportunity. *«Only one more such victory, and I am lost»*, cried Pyrrhos as he counted his fallen soldiers; and Joanna repeated these words when, after a sleepless night, she pulled three grey hairs from her head. Surely, she thought, as she foresaw defeat, it was useless to

prolong the battle, and she had selected her conqueror long before. A few moments before Saint Leo had died, he had bequeathed to her his only begotten son, or rather his nephew (the children of the popes were called nephews in Rome, especially when these Popes happened to be Saints). This nephew was a twenty year old youth at the time, blond as a Laconian dog (*) and as devoted to Joanna, and she ordained him to be her secret chamberlain, a great and enviable office at that time.

That papal offspring was named Florus and always slept in the room next the apostolic chamber, being ready to hasten to the calls of the little papal bell. Our Joanna was accustomed, like the ancient Athenians, to execute whatever she had decided without delay. But now she found herself for the first time in great embarrassment, for she sought vainly for a pretext that would allow her, as Pope, to extend more than her sandals for the kisses of that innocent youth. Many a time at the hour of midnight, leaving her wakeful bed, she slipped barefooted on tiptoe into the room where slept the chosen successor of Frumentius. And she would shade the light of the lamp with her fingers, as Selene had covered the rays with clouds when she visited the Latmian shepherd, and remained for whole hours viewing the sleeping youth. But one night she dared to touch the forehead of the sleeping one lightly with her lips, but fled in terror when she saw his eyelids moving. The good Florus narrated to his companions on the following day that a nocturnal vision entwined in an embroidered chemise visited him while he slept. But visions, dreams and ghosts were

(*) Fulvus Lacon amica vis pastorum etc. (Au. Note)

so familiar at that time, that instead of showing surprise, most of his confreres yawned as they listened to the tale of the young chamberlain. Nevertheless, he was certain that his apparition was not of the usual variety, and the following night he shivered on his bed and was not able to close his eyes.

Everything was silent in the papal house with the exception of the owls and the clocks, when a weak sound, like the flight of a nocturnal bird, or the walking of a young girl, hurrying to her first meeting, and fearful of the virginal sound of her shoes, could be heard at the front door of the bedroom. This door opened quietly as if it had been pushed by an immaterial wind, and the phantom again approached the bed, carefully walking on the tips of its toes. Florus felt his shirt grow moist, with sweat as cold as the water of the Styx, (I mean the Arcadian river, and not the infernal one, which was rather hot), and the dark increased his fright. The vision was self illuminated and like the ghosts, carried no lamp in that darkness, and the youth could barely discern its shape in the dying light of the fire, but it seemed like some white and doubtful cloud as it advanced toward the bed. The cloud, the phantom, the vampire, Joanna, at last stood by the bed, and encouraged by the immobility of the youth, she began to lick the cheeks of that forbidden fruit with the end of her lips, though she dared not bite it. This warm touching instantly dissipated the chill which had circulated in the veins of the youth, and as soon as he came to himself, he stretched out both arms to seize the phantom, but it just barely escaped him, leaving in his hands half of its chemise and five hairs of its head. But the good Florus was not satisfied with such spoils; his blood now seethed

with curiosity and he pursued the nocturnal vision, which fled swiftly before him. Twice and thrice he ran around the bedroom in this way until the phantom, caught in the foldings of its torn gown or its shroud, fell upon the carpet beneath the open window. And again, Florus stretched his hands; but instead of encountering bones, worms, putridness or other such classical ornaments of the vampires, his hands rested upon a warm and smooth skin which seemed to hold a living and throbbing heart. At that moment the moon, popping out behind the clouds, shone clearly upon the face and the bare breasts of the most holy Pope, Johannes VIII.

Here, my reader, I could, if I wished, borrow from Abbot Casti, the most holy Pulci, the most reverend Rabelais or other venerable priests, some obscenity in order to fatten my story; which is in danger of becoming dry as the fig tree of the Testament. But being neither a theologian nor a priest, or even at the least, a deacon, I doubt if I have the right to pollute my hands and your hearing. The poet of *Don Juan* found himself in the same predicament when, after a long pursuit, the hand of his hero reposed at last upon the bare breast of the third or fourth, let us say, of his heroines, resting like the ark on the mountain of Ararat. And not knowing in what way he could modestly represent what followed, Byron abandoned the poem and poetry, and became in desperation a misanthropist and philhellene and sped to be entombed in the swamps of Missolonghi. But in writing this true story, I am forced, whether willing or not, to confess that affairs so greatly improved between Joanna and Florus that after the necessary explanations, the cheeks of Panagia, which they had forgotten to cover, became red with shame, Saint Peter's cheeks

turned yellow with rage; the icon of the Crucified fell down and broke to pieces, and the patron angel of the Pope Johannes VIII, who had not known that the keeper of the keys of Paradise was a woman, flew with his wigs to Heaven. Had it been day when this abominable act was committed, undoubtedly an eclipse of the sun would have taken place as well; but as it was a dark night, the truth-loving chronologists could only represent the moon to us as shaded by a blood-stained cloud. According to others, the miracle was postponed until the following morning when the inhabitants of the eternal city waited in vain for the star of the day. Yes, that night was tripled, as when Zeus planted Hercules, but I doubt if Joanna found it long, because, according to Solomon, *«Hades, and fire and woman's love, they never have enough»*.

The day following that triple night, when the Pope appeared before his courtiers, the face of His Holiness was radiant, his lips and hands were liberally bestowing favors and blessings. This papal joy was reflected on the faces of the courtiers who raised their heads cheerfully, like the ears of corn to the rain after a long drought. The Chief of Christendom, on that day, distributed four bishoprics, ordained sixteen deacons for the priesthood, added two saints to the Saints' History, freed five rogues from the gallows, and saved twenty heretics from burning. Yet he regretted that he did not have a hundred hands like Briareos so that he might distribute more favors. Later, Joanna went to the church and there received the ambassadors of Prince Ansigu who sought help against the Saracens, which she granted readily. While all the acts were performed, unconsciously, her eyes again sought Florus, and his spirit fluttered about her head like a

bee about a flower, and often in the space of that day she whispered like the prophet king: «*Who is it that gives me wings like to doves to fly, and affords me repose?*» (*)

For two whole months, Joanna continued floating like a swan upon the streams of inexhaustable pleasures, adored by her new lover, even though she had passed that station of life when we usually begin to turn the book of desire backwards. But Florus was yet at that blissful age when even the thorns seem to us gentle and sweet smelling, and all the women beautiful, to whom we exhibit our hearts and lips for auction, throwing them fearlessly to every disclosed bosom; as when we seek water to quench our thirst, and are indifferent to whether it is translucent, or sandy and muddy. And although our heroine was forty years old, she was not at all unattractive, for her teeth were still whiter than her hair and for the down and odor of youth, there were substituted that voluptuous roundness and princely corpulency which so fascinates the beardless youths who desire to entrust their hearts' reins in firm and skilled hands.

Many critics (though if they be orthodox or heretical, I am not certain) prefer the Odyssey to the Iliad, and there are painters who prefer the ruins of a newly built building, and gastronomers who are fond of the odoriferous partridges. So do many followers of Solomon insist that the more mature mistresses know how to season the forbidden fruit, and spread with flowers the way leading to it, as the Jesuits decorate the road to Paradise.

Petrarch, after he had grown old, pictured an ideal woman who joined maturity with blooming

(*) Psalms, 44, 7. (Au. Note).

youth, and he vainly ran about the gardens and groves seeking that chimera which he called *a ripe fruit upon a blooming young tree*. But Florus had not yet begun to dream of white black birds, and he would not have exchanged the forty year old Joanna even for two twenty year old virgins.

Meanwhile, Summer passed, yet the most holy father did not hasten to return to his seat. The last leaves of the year piled up at the feet of the trees, the gentle murmurs of the sea changed to turbulent roarings, and the wolves descended from the mountains, but the two lovers remained cheerful and playful as the doves in the Spring. Many philosophers have attempted to discover what difference there was between man and beast. The Hebrews insisted that there was no difference (*); the Christians that man has an immortal soul, while the philosophers considered him to be logical, and Aristotle said that he sneezed more frequently than the other animals. (**) But better than all these suppositions was the observation of Socrates, as he noted that we surpass the animals in this: that what they practice in Spring only, the human being practices the whole year around. (***) Zeus, in order to justify his very bulky conjugal claims, threw the blame upon the influence of Spring, and was careful to see that the earth grew flowers whenever he desired to *commune* with Hera. (According to conception given to this word by Phillip Joannou). But Joanna, not being able to perform this same wonder, substituted firewoods and candles for the rays of the vernal sun, and aloe and

(*) Eccls., 3, 19. (Au. Note).

(**) Aristotle's Problem. Anecd. section II, 51. (Au. Note).

(***) Xenophon's Memora., I, 4. (Au. Note).

cinammon for the scent of flowers, and for the song of the birds she substituted the music of flutes and that of her own voice. The banquets, dice, monkeys, mimics, jesters and other amusements of the Middle Ages followed one after another unceasingly in the papal palace, and according to the chronologists, Bachanalian songs and tramlings of dancers often resounded in its corridors. The Pontifex no longer presided at the matins and followed that rule of Solomon. «*In vain is to you the rising early*», (*) and he composed his own prayers, liturgies and divine services, (**) following the text of the Testament which forbids nonsense to the Christians. Many a time, after a thrice blessed night, detaching herself from the bosom of her beloved, she would adulterate the Creed and the Our Father by asking, instead of daily bread, that the heavenly father grant *her Florus daily*.

Some king of Persia, Cyrus, Cambyses, Xerxes, or Chosroes, I do not remember exactly which one of these, promised a rich reward to anyone who could be happy with any female existing since the fall of Adam, but the trouble is that they are no more constant than Eve. The sweet cup either evades the hand before we reach to quench our thirst, or else the nectar within changes to vinegar and we turn away our lips in disgust. Our heroine as well, sailing with all sails set in the open sea of pleasure, came unexpectedly against a dreadful reef which she long ago had ceased to fear. After living

(*) Psalms, 132, 1. (Au. Note).

(**) These liturgies were survived up to the 16th century, when Felix Amerlino and Martino the Foagao saw them; and perhaps there are still copies of them in the impenetrable library of the Vatican. (Au. Note).

ten years with Frumentius and his rivals, she had grown to believe that she could eat as many forbidden apples as she liked without suffering any ill effects. And since she had not opened the book of the Scriptures for long while, she had forgotten that nearly all the Biblical heroines, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and the others, were barren until old age, and afterwarths, bore patriarchs and prophets.

Therefore, she was much surprised when the descriptive symptoms in the fourth book of Aristotle advised her, in the manner that the angel had informed the mother of Samson (*), that the Highest at last blessed her bowels. But though the Hebrew woman had leaped joyfully at the first frisking of her child, Joanna let the cup fall which she had brought to her lips, and left the room in her agitation, while the guests applauded the shedding of wine as a good omen. Running to her chamber, she locked herself in and began to mourn her misfortune.

All eyes within the papal palace had been closed tightly for hours while Joanna, still sleepless, supported her head upon her hands, like Saint Peter after he had renounced Jesus, and vainly sought a way to avoid the danger that menaced her. Sometimes she thought to leave Rome and the keys of Paradise, fleeing with Florus to some unknown corner of the earth, and at other times, with exorcisms or with medicine, she sought to drive away the uninvited and troublesome lodger in her womb. But these plans represented many difficulties and thorns, for she neither wished to lose the apostolic seat nor to have her life endangered, and vainly she sought some other solution to the riddle. Her head

(*) Judges, 13, 3. (Au. Note).

was heavy, her ears buzzed, and before her eyes there wandered those sparks and darknesses which the Stagirite contemplated as certain signs of pregnancy, when suddenly there resounded a great noise of wings. Joanna raised her head and saw, standing before her, a whitefeathered youth dressed in a glittering robe, bearing a halo upon his head, a red candle in his right hand and a cup in the left.

Our heroine had never seen an angel except in the figure of an icon, so she was much disturbed by this vision and did not think to sit up to receive the stranger or offer him a seat. However, the Heavenly envoy, after folding his wings and brushing blonde locks of hair back from his brow, fixed a fiery look upon the miserable Papissa (*) and said: «Joanna, this candle announces to you the eternal fire as punishment for your unlawfulness, while the cup tells of premature death and disgrace upon earth. Choose between them».

The angelic proposition threw our wretched heroine into a terrible confusion and she wavered for a long while, like David when he was forced to choose between hunger, war and the plague. The fear of death and the fear of Hell struggled for dominance in the breasts of poor Joanna, much as Esau and Jacob had struggled in the womb of Rebecca (**). At first, she extended her hand to the fiery torch, ready to sacrifice her future life for the sake of the present, but the spirits of that abyss who were always present at these invisible scenes, shone so fiercely and so much sadness overshadowed the face of the angel, that regretting this choice, she withdrew and extended the other hand to take the

(*) PAPISSA : A female pope. (Tr. Note)

(**) Genesis, 25, 22. (Au. Note).

cup of death and disgrace, and emptied it to the bottom. These happenings, my reader, are narrated by the good chronologists; and you, if you belong to the school of the *Happy*, who interpret the miracles of the Scripture as the results of physical causes, just as Plato interpreted the miracles of mythology, insisting that the angel who handed the lily to Pannagia was some disguised soldier, and that Lazarus was sleeping soundly when raised by Jesus; if, as I have said, you belong to that school, you will believe that Joanna saw the angel in a dream, or that some facetious friendly deacon, learning her secret, adorned himself with wings so as to frighten her. Should you prefer the method of Strauss, who, instead of passing the time inquiring for interpretations of inexplicable things, found it easy to call the miracles and the Testaments, myths; you can contemplate the vision of our heroine as a simple contrivance of her cassock-wearing biographers. As for me, not belonging to either school, I prefer to believe a thing as I have read it, because, according to Solomon, *«the innocent believes every word»*. (*)

When on the following day, Florus entered the papal bedroom, he found the most holy one lying on the carpet, possessed by dreadful convulsions; and the poor youth sought in vain, like another Pygmalion, to warm the lips of his beloved which were cold with fear. For fully fifteen days, Joanna remained in bed, wavering between life and death: and when, after that long agony, she arose at last, she went immediately to Rome and shutting herself in her chapel, forbade access to all the courtiers, as well as to the rays of the sun. There she was blockaded day and night by sinister phantoms, like

(*) Proverbs, 14, 15, (Au. Note).

Saul after he saw the shadow of Samuel, and she would spring up in terror whenever the door creaked, and fainted if an owl or a night crow croaked on the roof of the Vatican. The sight of the inhabitants of Heaven never did benefit the wretched mortals who were honored by visions of them. Senele was burned by the rays of Zeus, holy Nikon was left half-blind after seeing the famous beauty of Panagia, (*) Saint Paul was blinded by the brilliancy of Jesus, (**) and Zacharias was left dumb after the appearance of the angel. (***) The Hebrews were so much afraid of such visions, that every night before they went to bed they prayed to the Highest to guard them from those awful *things that walk in the dark*. (****)

But while the Pontifex trembled before the inhabitants of the other world, more fearful enemies than these menaced his authority, and the wrath of the Romans against him increased daily. The Italians at that time were not like the peoples of the constitutional nations of today, who contemplate kings simply as architectural ornaments set upon the top of a political edifice, much as statues are set on the tops of the temples. As they were not yet versed in the study of synonyms, they had not reached the point where they could see a difference between the words *reign and govern*, but demanded their leader to rule, as they would have demanded their cooks to cook. Seeing the treasures empty, the churches silent, the monasteries changed to taverns, the Saracens plundering the coasts, and the brigands encamped in the suburbs of the sacred city, the good

(*) See «Sinners' Salvation». (Au. Note).

(**) Acts of Apostles, 22, 11. (Au. Note).

(***) Luke, 1, 22. (Au. Note).

(****) Psalms, 1, 1. Au. Note).

Romans first questioned with astonishment, then with impatience, and at last with anger what His Holiness could be doing while so many enemies waged war and why he allowed his worldly and spiritual weapons to rust through disuse. The devout complained because no more benedictions were conferred on them. And the beggars, because the daily lentils were not distributed. The fanatics cited with tears that six months had gone by during which no sorcerer or heretic had been burned ; and the lame, those possessed by evil spirits, and the paralytics, inquired why the Pope did not work any more miracles. But the ones who most furiously opposed the Holy Father were the priests without quarters, the *chancellors* and *constables* for whom there was no more room in the court, the parasites who had been driven away from the papal kitchens, and even more vehement were the panders and barbers who could not understand why they were excluded from the palaces, when custom and tradition had imposed upon the Pope, shaving and gynecocracy. All of these, having vainly offered their devotion, services, razors and their boarders so many times, at last despairing, reverted to strong revolutionists. As they were not able to dip their spoons into the papal pot, they sought now to turn it upside down, much as the Indians, too, eradicate the high trees so that they can eat the fruits.

Even nature that year appeared to have a revolutionary disposition. The Tiber overflowed and carried off fences, boats, towers and bridges ; the flowers forgot to bloom, and the cherries to ripen, though it was the Middle of May, and the birds remained silent and dejected upon the boughs, like the godly cocks of Juresalem during the Passion week. Yet the most fearsome signs to the Romans

were the clouds of locusts that came in such droves that for eight days they overshadowed the rays of the sun, while the noise of their wings was like the sound of many chariots hastening to war. (*) These destructive insects had six wings, eight feet, long hair like women, and sharp tails like scorpions. I am not certain whether this description is historical, or whether the writer of the annals extracted it from the Apocalypse, as the evangelists had borrowed from the Old Testament when writing the New one.

However, these locusts were so voracious that after they had eaten all the ears of corn and the leaves of the trees, they rushed into the houses and even into the churches and devoured the shewbreads and the altar candles. Having consumed these, they began to devour one another and fought in mid air with so much ferocity, that the stricken bodies fell down more thickly than an Autumn hail, and no Roman dared to stir out of his house during those eight days without an umbrella or helmet. With this last plague, the anger of the faithful at last became unrestrained and impetuous, like the waters of their inundated river. Certain that one sign from the Pope would be enough to expel the winged beasts, they asked one another in desperation, why the representative of Christ kept his powerful hands in the pockets of his robe and left his subjects to the discretion of the locusts. The estimable classes of the opposition to government that I have mentioned above expanded their nostrils and smelled the approaching storm, like the Arabian horses the springs of the desert, and at the time of the uprising, they arranged the Roman rabble in phalanxes and companies, and led that shrieking cohort beneath the windows of the Vatican.

(*) Apocalypse, 9, 9. (Au. Note).

At the sight of the rebels, the guards hastened to protect themselves behind the gateways, and the courtiers ran to embrace the crosses and the shrines, as the Theban virgins had clasped the idols of the Acropolis when the seven chiefs of the cohorts brandished their shields before the gates. Only Florus who, during this long period that he had been deprived of his friend, walked day and night before the tightly fastened gate of the chapel, leaped joyfully when he at last found a reasonable excuse to go beyond the forbidden threshold. The unhappy Joanna, sitting upon a pew, fixing like the Egyptian monk, her restless glances upon her swelling belly, from which she expected to see issue not the Holy Ghost, but her shameful offspring, was persuaded with difficulty, in spite of the many supplications, to appear before her subjects, in order to calm the storm. When the pale and alienated form of the Pontifex shone upon the window, illuminated by a dim ray piercing the heavy clouds of locusts, many of the revolutionists, overtaken by an involuntary respect, bowed reverentially as the standards of the Romans bowed before Christ whenever he appeared at the court of Pilate. But many irreverent hands were raised that held stones and rotten apples, and many Pharisaical lips vomited insults and curses against the representative of Jesus. The Pontifex extended his holy hand to silence them as he spoke, declaring that on the following day, at the beginning of the ceremonies of the *Rogations*, he would anathematize the locusts in an official litany, but meanwhile would anathematize all those who did not return immediately to their homes. The papal promise instantly dispersed the uneasiness and calmed the wrath of the good Romans, their uproars resembling those tempests of Propontis which, according to

Aristotle, can be quieted by a few drops of oil.

Early in the morning of the following day, everybody was busy in the palaces. The high priests prepared their golden robes, the deacons polished the trays and the grooms the mules, and in the square the multitude, always fond of festivals, rubbed their hands together joyfully. The litany of *Rogations* was, as are most of the Christian ceremonies, a legacy of the idolaters, who had offered sacrifices for the fertility of the fields, and danced and entertained about the altars of Demeter and Bacchos, while they asked them to bless the ears of corn, the vines and the turnips. And their descendants implored the protection of the ears of corn with the same ceremonies, substituting the names of Panagia and Saint Martino for those of Demeter and Bacchos. But on this day there was to be a double ceremony for the anathematizing of the locusts was to precede the *Rogations*.

In that golden century of the faith, not only the sinful humans, but all mischievous animals, such as rats, ravens, wild boars, worms, canker worms and fleas were also subject to the anathemas of the church, whenever they dared to eat greens or to disturb the sleep of the faithful. But the multitude and the malignity of the locusts constituted sufficient cause for great official ceremony which all the Christians of Rome and the vicinity hastened to attend.

While the courtiers, hopeful and noisy, crowded together in the cloisters and corridors of the Vatican, Joanna tearfully said goodbye to her lover. Our miserable heroine had passed a bad and sleepless night in her chapel, sometimes lost in thought and then again engaged in trying on Pontifical robes to find which one of them would best conceal the scandalous bulk of her belly. The dreadful words of

the angel resounded fatally in the ears of the wretched Joanna who, having lost all her philosophy after the angel's appearance, fearfully remembered the scales in which the Archangel Michael weighed the soul, the whip of the Devil, the boilers, the cold, the harpoons, the snakes, the fire-tongs, and the apparatus of the Hell of the Middle Ages. Then she began to think about the various philosophical systems, about transmigration, about the migration of souls to the moon, and finally about earthquakes, locusts, leprosy and plague, always coming at last to the same conclusion that God had not only filled this world with tortures and grief, but the other with mischievous devils as well. These and other questions our heroine debated that night, many of which I am forced to omit since I wish to terminate my story. If I were a poet, I would have said that my Pegasus smelled his stables and willing or not, he drives me to it; but as a *paizos*, (*) I have a greater right to admit that after so many wanderings, I grew tired at last and longed for my stable, or rather, the climax of my drama.

The good Florus, observing the paleness and restlessness of his friend, sought in every way to hold her back, entreating her with tears to postpone the litany. But having once accepted the bitter cup, Joanna must drink it to the bottom. And besides, it would be impossible for her to retreat now. The encamped crowds underneath the palaces stamped their feet impatiently; the candles flared, the bells resounded, and vapors rose from the lighted censers. So His Holiness the Pope, placing the tiara upon his head and taking in his hands the pastoral staff,

(*) PAIZOS: - Means pedestrian; also prose poet.
(Tr. Note).

withdrew from the breast of his dearest, though Florus was possessed of presentiments as black as the ravens who fluttered above the head of Gracchus on the day of his death.

When the holy chief of the faithful appeared on the plain of the Vatican, thousands of Romans awaited the litany, and as the Pope rode to the church of Saint John, the crowds formed in long snake-like lines by the side of his procession. The standard-bearers marched at the head, carrying the crosses and the icons of the tutelary saints. After these followed the high priests dressed in purple robes, and after them the abbots and the monks, who traveled barefooted, leaning their ash covered heads to the ground. The nuns and deaconesses followed under the standard of Saint Marcellinus, the married women under that of Euphemia, and finally came the virgins clothed in white and with curled hair, who were dejected because the locusts had left neither roses nor narcissuses, with which they were accustomed in those flourishing years of the faith, to adorn their heads and breasts at the official litanies. The lower clergy, the soldiers and the multitude followed last, and after them came a mob of hot drink sellers and tavern keepers, who warmed the devotion of the faithful with beer, meat and concoctions made from quinces. That entire mob sang hymns to Jesus and Saint Peter, but there were some newly converted Saracens, Germans, Benedictines, Greek monks, English theologians and a few other foreigners in the procession who had not arrived in time to learn Latin, so that each uttered the psalms in his own language, thus producing a strange cacophony, which the pious Chateaubriand would undoubtedly have called a

most harmonious symphony of all nations, honoring the Christ.

The procession, after passing the Tribute of Trajan, and the amphitheater of Favius, finally stopped to rest in the square of Latenaro. The heat and dust that day were so severe, that, according to the chronologists, even the Devil might have been inspired to take a bath in the holy water. The bodies of the struggling locusts flew above them, the wounded ones falling to be grated under the feet of the worshippers and the pack animals. All these circumstances increased the suffering and despondency of the miserable Joanna, who could hardly hold herself upon the mule, feeling every few moments such a disturbance in her bowels that she stumbled twice as she ascended the steps of the magnificent throne from which height she was to throw the anathema at the locusts. Her Holiness, after immersing the sacred whisk in the holy water, sprinkled it toward the East wind, West wind, the South and North, and then taking an ivory image of the Crucified, she raised it up to cross the pestilential atmosphere that was filled with locusts. But suddenly the holy cross fell from her hands and broke against the ground, and not long after the Pontifex himself fell, pale and half dead, by the feet of the throne. At that spectacle, the herd of the faithful sprang up, pressed together like sheep overtaken by a terror of a wolf. The holders of the tail of the papal robe hastened to help the representative of the Church, who groaned as he rolled upon the dust, like a snake cut in half. Some said that His Holiness had trampled upon a mandragora, others that a scorpion stung his sacred legs, and others that he had eaten poisonous mushrooms. But a greater number persisted that His Holiness was possessed by devils,

and the bishop of Porto, the greatest exorcist of those years, hastened to pour holy water upon her, commanding the evil spirit to choose another dwelling.

The looks of all the faithful were fixed upon the pale face of the Pontifex, expecting to see the unclean spirit departing as usual from the mouth or the ear, when, instead of a spirit, a premature and half dead infant rolled from the apron of the chief of Christendom! The priest who supported the Pope retreated in horror, while the circle of the curious came closer, making the sign of the cross and shouting. The women ascended on the backs of the men, and those mounted on horses raised themselves and stood upon their beasts of burden while the deacons were forced to use the standards and crosses as clubs in order to open passage through the mob. Some hierarchs who were deeply devoted to the Holy See, sought to change the madness of the multitude to contrition by crying out, «Miracle»! in a loud voice and calling the faithful to worship. But such a miracle was unheard of and very singular in the annals of the Christian thaumaturgy which, although it had borrowed many prodigies from the idolaters, did not consider it likely that any saint would be represented as pregnant and bringing forth young. So the voices of the pious priests were drowned in the uproars of the furious mob who kicked and trampled and spat upon the Papissa and Papidion, (*) demanding that they be thrown into the Tiber. Florus succeeded in rending the mob, and supported the wretched Joanna on his bosom. Her paleness increased with every moment and finally, raising up her dying look to the sky, perhaps to remind

(*) PAPIDION : The pope's child. (Tr. Note).

Him who inhabited it that she had emptied the cup to the last drop, she rendered up her spirit, murmuring the verse of Isaiah: *«My cheeks I gave for strokes, my face I did not avert from shame and spittings»*.

As soon as that sinful soul abandoned her transitory dwelling, a multitude of devils rushed up from Hell to snatch their prey for they thought she had been written as an unquestioned pledge long ago upon their books. But at the same moment a phalanx of angels descended from Heaven and repulsing the devils, they insisted that her repentance had cancelled all the rights of Hades. But the devils could not be persuaded and arrayed their horns against the arguments and swords of the angels. The struggle among the spirits was quite heated, their weapons resounded like clouds brought into collision, and a bloody rain dripped upon the faithful who were assembled in the square. Suddenly the angel who had appeared to Joanna rent the ranks of the contenders and seized her miserable soul from where I do not know, and ascending upon a cloud, removed her ... to Purgatory, probably. These miracles, my reader, are recounted not by four fishermen, but by over four hundred venerable cassock-wearing chronologists, and we, in the presence of such an assembly of august witnesses, bend our necks and exclaim after Saint Tertullian, *«We believe them, because they are unbelievable»*.

The body of poor Joanna, with her infant, was buried on the spot where she had expired and above the grave a marble monument decorated with a statue representing a woman bringing forth her young, was erected. Florus became a hermit; and the pious pilgrims, in order not to contaminate

their sandals by trampling over the footsteps of the sacreligious Papissa, have traveled ever since by another road to Lateran.

TEΛΟΣ

(The End.)



TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS

PAGE	LINE	READS	READ
9	12	famlliar	familiar
10	9	as	as a
11	11	fround	found
12	10	thonsand	thousand
13	14	<i>fonnd</i>	<i>found</i>
14	35	fron	from
15	5	Gutlhac	Guthlac
16	30	(An. Note)	(Au. Note)
18	3	be	he
20	20	Irminsul	Erminsul
22	15	Ingelheim	Engelheim
22	29	hurse	nurse
26	4	nisfortunes	misfortunes
26	35	wickddness	wickedness
28	32	beauliful	beautiful
29	24	quiest	quiet
30	34	cread	bread
31	5	wrthin	within
31	25	kninghts	knights
33	34	desperatiu	desperation
40	10	Ingelheim	Engelheim
41	23	ckeek	cheek
41	34	rhat	that
42	12	Pangia	Panagia
44	26	sons'	son's
47	4	Augnstine	Augustine
48	35	rhe	the
59	7	greatings	greetings
60	11	Irminsul	Erminsul
60	33	Irminsul	Erminsul
68	31	tefuge	refuge
68	34	ky	by
70	26	constitntion	constitution
74	23	monestical	monastical

PAGE	LINE	READS	READ
75	24	theire	their
76	26	isolent	insolent
80	10	harmlees	harmless
81	31	tor	for
81	35	Dehonnaire	Debonnaire
82	15	Germavy	Germany
82	29	Irminsul	Erminsul
86	35	btasphemous	blasphemous
88	2	photographs	photographs
88	36	bnrial	burial
89	29	rable	table
90	25	Bnt	But
92	3	sf	of
94	19	tbe	the
95	25	wheu	when
96	14	Tne	The
97	25	new	knew
103	34	paintigs	paintings
105	24	faihful	faithful
107	24	hardy	hardly
108	2	rainstating	reinstating
108	12	apperance	appearance
108	19	remided	reminded
115	29	bat	but
115	30	whon	whom
115	33	patriach	patriarch
115	33	overthown	overthrown
115	36	qage	page
116	34	UMHEWN	UNHEWN
117	26	Afte	After
120	21	vouths	youths
123	35	whith	with
140	10	fhe	the
150	14	klss	kiss
157	3	fo	to
157	12	violins and cellos	violoncellos
163	8	spe	she
165	33	Martino the Foagao	Martin the Frank
169	6	Senele	Semele
174	29	nderneath	underneath

Of this first edition of Papissa Joanna, Athenai, Hellas, nineteen hundred and thirty five, one thousand and fifty copies are issued. One thousand copies bearing the stamp of the translator are for sale, fifty copies, numbered from one to fifty, are signed and bearing the stamp of the translator, are for gratis.

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